



# Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



MONDAY — 8 NOV 2021

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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Kuwait govt. submits resignation</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/kuwaiti-government-submits-resignation-emir-media-2021-11-08/">https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/kuwaiti-government-submits-resignation-emir-media-2021-11-08/</a>
GIST	<p>KUWAIT, Nov 8 (Reuters) - Kuwait's government on Monday submitted its resignation to the ruling emir, state news agency KUNA reported, a move that could help end a standoff with opposition lawmakers that has hindered fiscal reform.</p> <p>It was the second time a government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Sabah has resigned this year in a feud with the elected parliament.</p> <p>KUNA said the emir received Sheikh Sabah who handed him the written resignation of his cabinet.</p> <p>It was not immediately clear if Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmed al-Sabah, who has final say in state matters, would accept the resignation of the government, which was formed in March after the previous cabinet stepped down.</p> <p>Several opposition MPs have insisted on questioning the premier on various issues, including the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and corruption.</p> <p>The feud has paralysed legislative work, hindered efforts to boost the OPEC producer's state finances - hit hard last year by low oil prices and the pandemic - and enact measures including a debt law needed to tap global markets.</p> <p>Deadlocks between the cabinet and assembly have for decades led to government reshuffles and dissolutions of parliament, hampering investment and reform.</p> <p>Lawmakers want to question Sheikh Sabah, who has been premier since late 2019, and have queried the constitutionality of a motion passed in March delaying any such questioning until the end of next year.</p> <p>The government recently launched a dialogue with MPs to break the impasse, with the opposition demanding to be able to question Sheikh Sabah and an amnesty pardoning political dissidents.</p> <p>Kuwait's cabinet on Sunday approved draft decrees for the planned amnesty ahead of it being issued by an emiri decree.</p> <p>Kuwait does not permit political parties, but it has given its legislature more influence than similar bodies in other Gulf monarchies, including the power to pass and block laws, question ministers and submit no-confidence votes against senior government officials.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Global Covid cases hit 250M</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/global-covid-19-cases-near-250-million-delta-surge-eases-2021-11-07/">https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/global-covid-19-cases-near-250-million-delta-surge-eases-2021-11-07/</a>
GIST	<p>Nov 8 (Reuters) - Global COVID-19 cases surpassed 250 million on Monday as some countries in eastern Europe experience record outbreaks, even as the <a href="#">Delta variant</a> surge eases and many countries <a href="#">resume trade and tourism</a>.</p>

The daily average number of cases has fallen by 36% over the past three months, according to a Reuters analysis, but the virus is still infecting 50 million people worldwide every 90 days due to the highly transmissible Delta variant.

By contrast, it took nearly a year to record the first 50 million COVID-19 cases.

Health experts are optimistic that many nations have put the worst of the pandemic behind them thanks to vaccines and natural exposure, although they caution that colder weather and upcoming holiday gatherings could increase cases.

"We think between now and the end of 2022, this is the point where we get control over this virus ... where we can significantly reduce severe disease and death," Maria Van Kerkhove, an epidemiologist leading the World Health Organisation, told Reuters on Nov. 3.

Infections are still rising in 55 out of 240 countries, with [Russia, Ukraine and Greece](#) at or near record levels of reported cases since the pandemic started two years ago, according to a Reuters analysis. Report ad

Eastern Europe has among the lowest vaccination rates in the region. More than half of all new infections reported worldwide were from countries in Europe, with a million new infections about every four days, according to the analysis.

[Several Russian regions](#) said this week they could impose additional restrictions or extend a workplace shutdown as the country witnesses record deaths due to the disease.

On Monday Russia reported 39,400 new COVID-19 cases, including nearly 5,000 in Moscow alone.

#### VACCINE INEQUITY

In Germany, too, despite much higher levels of vaccination, the infection rate rose to its [highest level](#) since the start of the pandemic and doctors said they would need to postpone scheduled operations in coming weeks to cope.

By contrast, Japan recorded [no daily deaths](#) from COVID-19 on Sunday for the first time in more than a year, local media said. Vaccinations have increased now to cover more than 70% of Japan's population.

China, the world's most populous country where the pandemic first began, administered about 8.6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines on Sunday, bringing the total number of doses given to 2.3 billion, data showed on Monday.

Several world leaders have stressed the need to improve vaccination programs, particularly in the poorest countries.

More than half the world's population has yet to receive a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to Our World in Data, a figure that drops to less than 5% in low-income countries.

Improving vaccine access will be on the agenda of meetings of the powerful Asia-Pacific trade group APEC, hosted virtually by New Zealand this week.

APEC members, which include Russia, China and the United States, pledged at a special meeting in June to [expand sharing](#) and manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines and lift trade barriers for medicines.

"Together we are continuing to keep supply chains functioning and are supporting trade in critical medical supplies – including testing kits, PPE and now vaccines," New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Monday.

	The World Health Organization and other aid groups last month appealed to leaders of the world's 20 biggest economies to fund a \$23.4 billion plan to bring COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and drugs to poorer countries in the next 12 months.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Feds urge schools to provide Covid shots</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-jill-biden-vivek-murthy-6f30d4f67bd39704f38629a23ed35b5b">https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-jill-biden-vivek-murthy-6f30d4f67bd39704f38629a23ed35b5b</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is encouraging local school districts to host clinics to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to kids — and information to parents on the benefits of the shots — as the White House looks to speedily provide vaccines to those ages 5 to 11.</p> <p>First lady Jill Biden and Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy are set to visit the Franklin Sherman Elementary School in McLean, Virginia, on Monday to launch a nationwide campaign to promote child vaccinations. The school was the first to administer the polio vaccine in 1954.</p> <p>The visit comes just days after federal regulators recommended the COVID-19 vaccine for the age group. The White House says Biden will visit pediatric vaccination clinics across the country over the coming weeks to encourage the shots.</p> <p>At the same time, Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra and Education Secretary Miguel Cardona are sending a letter to school districts across the country calling on them to organize vaccine clinics for their newly eligible students. The officials are reminding school districts that they can tap into billions of dollars in federal coronavirus relief money to support pediatric vaccination efforts.</p> <p>The Biden administration is providing local school districts with tools to help schools partner with pharmacies to administer shots. And it's asking schools to share information on the benefits of vaccines and details about the vaccination process with parents, in an effort to combat disinformation surrounding the shots.</p> <p>The White House is encouraging schools to host community conversations and share fact sheets on the vaccines and is working with the American Academy of Pediatrics to partner local physicians with schools aiming to share science-based information about the shots.</p> <p>About 28 million kids ages 5 to 11 are newly eligible for shots now that the Pfizer vaccine is approved for the age group. The White House says the federal government has procured enough of the two-dose vaccine for all of them.</p> <p>A Pfizer study of 2,268 children found the vaccine was almost 91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infections. The Food and Drug Administration studied the shots in 3,100 vaccinated kids in concluding the shots are safe.</p> <p>While kids are less likely than adults to develop severe COVID-19, with the delta variant they get infected and transmit “just as readily as adults do,” Dr. Anthony Fauci, government’s top infectious diseases expert, said at a recent White House briefing.</p> <p>Since the coronavirus pandemic began, at least 94 children ages 5 to 11 have died from COVID-19, more than 8,300 have been hospitalized and more than 5,000 have developed a serious inflammatory condition linked to the virus.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Research: vaccines, myocarditis link</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/researchers-probe-link-between-covid-19-vaccines-and-myocarditis-11636290002">https://www.wsj.com/articles/researchers-probe-link-between-covid-19-vaccines-and-myocarditis-11636290002</a>

As U.S. health authorities expand use of the leading Covid-19 vaccines, researchers investigating [heart-related risks](#) linked to the shots are exploring several emerging theories, including one centered on the spike protein made in response to vaccination.

Researchers aren't certain why the messenger RNA vaccines, one from [Pfizer Inc. PFE 10.86%](#) and partner [BioNTech SE BNTX -20.92%](#) and the other from [Moderna Inc., MRNA -16.56%](#) are likely causing the inflammatory heart conditions myocarditis and pericarditis [in a small number of cases](#).

Some theories center on [the type of spike protein](#) that a person makes in response to the mRNA vaccines. The mRNA itself or other components of the vaccines, researchers say, could also be setting off certain inflammatory responses in some people.

One new theory under examination: improper injections of the vaccine directly into a vein, which sends the vaccine to heart muscle.

To find answers, some doctors and scientists are running tests in lab dishes and examining heart-tissue samples from people who developed myocarditis or pericarditis after getting vaccinated.

Myocarditis describes inflammation of the heart muscle, while pericarditis refers to inflammation of the sac surrounding the muscle.

Covid-19 itself can cause both conditions. They have also been reported in a smaller number of people who got an mRNA vaccine, most commonly in men under 30 years and [adolescent males](#).

About 877 confirmed cases of myocarditis in vaccinated people under 30 years have been reported in the U.S., out of 86 million mRNA vaccine doses administered, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The risk is higher within seven days of the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, the Food and Drug Administration says. Most myocarditis cases in vaccinated people are relatively mild, and patients get better on their own or with minimal treatment, doctors say.

The CDC recommends that anyone 5 years and older should get vaccinated, saying the benefits of preventing Covid-19 illness, hospitalizations and death far outweigh the risk of myocarditis, even in younger males.

Researchers have been trying to understand the link between the cases and vaccination, as health authorities expand the vaccination campaign [by recommending boosters](#) and broadening use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to younger children.

The FDA has, however, [held up authorizing use of the Moderna vaccine](#) in adolescents while it investigates the risk

Some theories about the vaccines' link to myocarditis center on the spike protein on the surface of the coronavirus.

The spike protein helps the virus gain entry into human cells to replicate. The mRNA vaccines are designed to cause the body to make a certain version of the spike protein, which then sets off an immune response.

The immune response includes neutralizing antibodies that target the spike protein and thereby block the virus's ability to get inside cells and replicate. The immune response can protect a person against Covid-19 or lessen its severity if someone is exposed to the virus.

Yet there may be similarities between the spike protein and proteins found in the heart muscle, prompting the body's immune defenses to mobilize against the heart, according to Biykem Bozkurt, a professor of medicine specializing in cardiology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

The antibodies against the spike protein may have the unintended effect of acting against heart proteins, said Dr. Bozkurt, who co-wrote [a review of vaccine-associated myocarditis](#) in the journal Circulation in July.

This "molecular mimicry" theory hasn't been fully tested in vaccinated people and doesn't explain why myocarditis only occurs in certain people, she said.

Some of the mRNA in the vaccines may also be taken up by heart cells known as cardiomyocytes, said Jay Schneider, a consultant in cardiovascular medicine at the Mayo Clinic's Jacksonville, Fla., campus.

These cells may then produce the spike protein of the coronavirus, which could draw an antibody response against them, Dr. Schneider said. He said he has conducted lab tests and found that heart cells have taken up the Moderna vaccine and then expressed the spike protein.

Dr. Schneider hasn't yet published results from these experiments in a peer-reviewed journal, and said they should be interpreted with caution.

Some doctors have theorized that improper injections of the vaccines may be contributing.

The shots are supposed to be injected into the shoulder muscle, also known as the deltoid muscle. If the injection accidentally reaches a vein, it could lead to delivery of some of the vaccine to the heart through blood vessels.

Hong Kong researchers found that injecting mice intravenously with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine induced both myocarditis and pericarditis in the animals, according to [results published online in August](#) by the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases.

That myocarditis appears to happen more among younger males after vaccination than in other age and sex groups suggests a link to the hormone testosterone, which is usually at high levels in younger males, according to researchers.

Testosterone may heighten an inflammatory immune response, Dr. Bozkurt said, leading to myocarditis in some male adolescents and young men.

Some studies have suggested that Moderna's vaccine carries a higher risk of myocarditis than Pfizer's. If this difference is confirmed, it could be related to differences in dose levels, Moderna Chief Executive Stéphane Bancel said. Moderna's vaccine contains more mRNA per dose than Pfizer's.

Some vaccine specialists have cited the dose difference as one reason that the Moderna vaccine's effectiveness against Covid-19 appears to hold up for longer than Pfizer's.

Mr. Bancel said the benefit-risk ratio for Moderna's vaccine is still favorable for younger males.

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HEADLINE	11/07 China uses US targets for missiles
SOURCE	<a href="https://news.usni.org/2021/11/07/china-builds-missile-targets-shaped-like-u-s-aircraft-carrier-destroyers-in-remote-desert">https://news.usni.org/2021/11/07/china-builds-missile-targets-shaped-like-u-s-aircraft-carrier-destroyers-in-remote-desert</a>
GIST	The Chinese military has built targets in the shape of an American aircraft carrier and other U.S. warships in the Taklamakan desert as part of a new target range complex, according to photos provided to USNI News by satellite imagery company Maxar.



The full-scale outline of a U.S. carrier and at least two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are part of the target range that has been built in the Ruoqiang region in central China. The site is near a former target range China used to test early versions of its so-called carrier killer DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missiles, [according to press reports in 2013](#).

This new range shows that China continues to focus on anti-carrier capabilities, with an emphasis on U.S. Navy warships. Unlike the Iranian Navy's aircraft carrier-shaped target in the Persian Gulf, the new facility shows signs of a sophisticated instrumented target range.

The carrier target itself appears to be a flat surface without the carrier's island, aircraft lifts, weapons sponsors or other details, the imagery from Maxar shows. On radar, the outline of the carrier stands out from the surrounding desert – not unlike a target picture, according to imagery provided to USNI News by Capella Space.

There are two more target areas representing an aircraft carrier that do not have the metaling, but are distinguishable as carriers due to their outline. But other warship targets appear to be more elaborate. There are numerous upright poles positioned on them, possibly for instrumentation, according to the imagery. Alternatively these may be used for radar reflectors to simulate the superstructure of the vessel.

The facility also has an extensive rail system. An Oct. 9 image from Maxar showed a 75 meter-long target with extensive instrumentation on a 6 meter-wide rail.

The area has been traditionally used for ballistic missile testing, according to a summary of the Maxar images by geospatial intelligence company [AllSource Analysis](#) that identified the site from satellite imagery.

“The mockups of several probable U.S. warships, along with other warships (mounted on rails and mobile), could simulate targets related to seeking/target acquisition testing,” according to the AllSource Analysis summary, which said there are no indications of weapon impact areas in the immediate vicinity of the mockups. “This, and the extensive detail of the mockups, including the placement of multiple sensors on and around the vessel targets, it is probable that this area is intended for multiple uses over time.”

Analysis of historical satellite images shows that the carrier target structure was first built between March and April of 2019. It underwent several rebuilds and was then substantially dismantled in December 2019. The site came back to life in late September of this year and the structure was substantially complete by early October.

China has several anti-ship ballistic missile programs overseen by the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force. The land-based CSS-5 Mod 5 (DF-21D) missile has a range of over 800 nautical miles. It has a maneuverable reentry vehicle (MaRV) to target ships. The larger CSS-18 (DF-26) has a range of around 2,000 nautical miles.

“In July 2019, the PLARF conducted its first-ever confirmed live-fire launch into the South China Sea, firing six DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missiles into the waters north of the Spratly Islands,” according to the Pentagon's latest annual report on China's military. The Chinese are also fielding a longer range anti-ship ballistic missile that initially emerged in 2016.

“The multi-role DF-26 is designed to rapidly swap conventional and nuclear warheads and is capable of conducting precision land-attack and anti-ship strikes in the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the South China Sea from mainland China. In 2020, the PRC fired anti-ship ballistic missiles against a moving target in the South China Sea, but has not acknowledged doing so,” reads the report.

In addition to the land-based anti-ship ballistic missiles, China has a program to equip the People's Liberation Army Navy H-6 bombers [with a massive anti-ship ballistic missile. First revealed in 2018](#), the

	<p>CH-AS-X-13 will likely be the largest air-launched missile in existence, and would be large enough to <a href="#">accommodate a hypersonic warhead</a>.</p> <p>Another possible launch platform for anti-ship ballistic missiles is the new Type-055 Renhai Class large destroyer. Described as a guided-missile cruiser, it will be capable of carrying anti-ship ballistic missiles, according to the Pentagon report.</p> <p>It's not the first time China has built an aircraft carrier target in the desert. Since 2003, a large concrete pad, roughly the size of a carrier, has <a href="#">been used as a target</a>. The slab, which is part of the Shuangchengzi missile test range, has been hit many times and is frequently repaired. The new site in the Taklamakan desert is 600 miles away and is much more evolved. The newer ship targets are closer approximations of the vessels that they are supposed to represent.</p> <p>While questions remain on the extent of weapons that will be tested at the new facility, the level of sophistication of what can now be seen at the site show the PLA is continuing to invest in deterrents to limit the efficacy of U.S. naval forces close to China – in particular targeting the U.S. carrier fleet.</p> <p>According to the Pentagon report released last week, a primary objective of the PLARF will be to keep U.S. carriers at risk from anti-ship ballistic missiles throughout the Western Pacific.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Borders reopen after 20mo.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://news.yahoo.com/us-finally-reopening-borders-20-150009885.html">https://news.yahoo.com/us-finally-reopening-borders-20-150009885.html</a>
GIST	<p>The United States reopened its land and air borders Monday to foreign visitors fully vaccinated against Covid-19, ending 20 months of travel restrictions that separated families, hobbled tourism and strained diplomatic ties.</p> <p>The ban, imposed by former president Donald Trump in early 2020 and upheld by his successor Joe Biden, has been widely criticized and become emblematic of the upheavals caused by the pandemic.</p> <p>At airports in Europe, passengers queued excitedly to board planes bound for the US east coast, while long lines of masked people, cars and motor homes were seen before dawn at the borders with Mexico and Canada.</p> <p>The United States closed its borders after March 2020 to travelers from large parts of the world, including the European Union, Britain and China, India and Brazil, in an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus.</p> <p>Overland visitors from Mexico and Canada were also banned.</p> <p>- Larger planes -</p> <p>At Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, Charlotte Boulais, 27, stood in the queue to drop off her luggage, excited at the prospect of seeing her friends again.</p> <p>"I'm going to New York, we're going to sightsee with my husband and see friends who have been over there for a year-and-a-half and who we haven't seen because of Covid," she said.</p> <p>Over at London Heathrow Airport, two planes from rival airlines British Airways and Virgin Atlantic heading to New York took off at the same time from parallel runways, to mark the occasion.</p> <p>To cope with surging demand, airlines have increased the number of transatlantic flights and plan to use larger planes.</p> <p>- Dollar shortages -</p>



Along the US-Mexico border, many cities have faced economic struggles due to anti-Covid trade restrictions.

Underscoring anticipation of the reopening, currency exchange centers in Mexico's Ciudad Juarez were hit by a shortage of dollars.

The Ciudad Juarez government has implemented a special system to direct traffic, including installing portable toilets on the three bridges crossing into the United States "as waiting times of up to four hours are estimated," said the local director of road safety, Cesar Alberto Tapia.

In the United States' northern neighbor, seniors will be able to resume their annual trips to Florida to escape the bitter Canadian winters.

Before sunrise, passenger cars and motor homes were seen lined up on Rainbow Bridge between Niagara Falls in Ontario and New York.

But the cost of PCR tests Canada requires for cross-border travel -- up to \$250 -- can be prohibitive.

Ann Patchett, an Ontario resident, told the Ottawa Citizen it will cost \$500 for her and her husband to go south to visit family.

"Do you want to hug your children? Do you want to tuck your grandchildren into bed?" she asked. "It's very frustrating."

- Some restrictions remain -

Lifting the travel ban will affect more than 30 countries, but entry into the United States will not be totally unregulated.

US authorities plan to closely monitor travelers' vaccination status and will still require them to present negative Covid-19 tests.

The reopening will happen in two phases.

Starting Monday, vaccines will be required for "non-essential" trips -- such as family visits or tourism -- although unvaccinated travelers will still be allowed into the country for "essential" trips.

A second phase, beginning in early January, will require all visitors to be fully vaccinated to enter the United States by land, no matter the reason for their trip.

US health authorities have said all vaccines approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization would be accepted for entry by air.

- Europe's rising cases -

Washington has not yet commented on Europe's recent Covid-19 case increase.

The WHO has expressed "grave concern" over the rising pace of infections in Europe, warning the current trajectory could mean "another half a million Covid-19 deaths" by February.

US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said Sunday on ABC he's "cautiously optimistic about where we are," while adding: "We can't take our foot off the accelerator until we're at the finish line."

But in Berlin, 51-year-old Elisabeth Zours is ready to hit the road.

	<p>A lifelong Rolling Stones fan, Zours had to miss a St. Louis show by the rock supergroup in September due to restrictions and was "frustrated" by the slow US reopening.</p> <p>Now she plans to make up for lost time.</p> <p>"I've got tickets for four (US) concerts," she said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Cop26 negotiators turn to Plan B</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/cop26-negotiators-turn-to-plan-b-as-climate-pledges-fall-short-11636303732?mod=hp_lead_pos7">https://www.wsj.com/articles/cop26-negotiators-turn-to-plan-b-as-climate-pledges-fall-short-11636303732?mod=hp_lead_pos7</a>
GIST	<p>GLASGOW—After a week of climate talks here at <a href="#">the COP26 summit</a>, negotiators are grappling with a fundamental math problem: The commitments governments have collectively made to slash greenhouse gas emissions don't add up to what scientists think is needed to avoid the most destructive effects of global warming.</p> <p>Addressing that shortcoming is one of the main tasks of the summit's second week. Negotiators from key governments, including the U.S. and the European Union, are no longer banking on a few big developing countries to come up with deeper cuts during the summit itself, according to officials. Instead, they plan to spend the rest of the conference negotiating how to push governments to make new, more ambitious pledges in the near future.</p> <p>Officials are now discussing ways to encourage governments to revisit their emissions plans more frequently than every five years, a schedule set by the Paris climate accord of 2015. That, they hope, could create a mechanism to embolden countries to continue reducing emissions more quickly.</p> <p>The challenge is that most governments, including all the world's major emitters, have recently updated their emissions plans, and are expecting to spend the next few years passing them into law. The Biden administration is already waging domestic political battles to adopt its proposals. Other governments such as China <a href="#">have just submitted updated plans</a> under the Paris accord after rebuffing pressure by the West to be more ambitious.</p> <p>While scientists say that all countries are affected by climate change, pressure to cut emissions more quickly is coming from poorer countries that are particularly vulnerable to its impacts, such as rising sea levels and drought. The Climate Vulnerable Forum, a coalition of developing countries that includes Bangladesh, Ethiopia and the Maldives, last week asked governments to re-examine their emissions plans every year.</p> <p>They want to make sure the plans are in line with the Paris accord's goal: cutting emissions to levels that scientists hope will limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial-era temperatures by the end of the century.</p> <p>"We need such a pact to reaffirm that the Paris regime can really deliver," said Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen.</p> <p>The summit's first week delivered some important climate agreements, including pledges to stop deforestation and slash methane emissions. Dozens of countries said they would stop funding new coal-fired power plants, including some like Poland and Vietnam that rely heavily on coal to generate electricity.</p> <p>India announced a long-awaited update to its climate change plan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country is aiming to generate half of its electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030 and achieve net zero greenhouse gases by 2070, meaning its emissions would be low enough that they can be completely offset by natural and artificial means of absorbing them.</p>

The International Energy Agency said that with India's new announcement, the world is on track for 1.8 degrees of warming by the end of the century, the first time the agency's analysis has put Earth's temperature trajectory below two degrees. But the IEA also cautioned that governments' plans don't outline enough emissions reductions by 2030 to keep the 1.5 degree target within reach.

"Governments are making bold promises for future decades, but short-term action is insufficient," said Fatih Birol, the IEA's executive director.

Governments face a daunting timeline. At current emissions levels, warming above the 1.5 degrees threshold will be inevitable in less than 12 years, according to the Global Carbon Project, a collective of scientists that provides climate data to the United Nations. The U.N. says annual carbon dioxide emissions need to fall 45% by 2030 compared with 2010 to hit the target.

"Up until Glasgow, the benchmark for whether you raise ambition is whether you enhanced your emissions plan," said one European official. "How do you create that same sense of pressure going forward?"

During the first week, the governments also made some halting progress on the so-called rulebook of the Paris agreement. This part of the talks includes rules for how governments would create a new market for emissions reduction credits that would allow a government to meet its emissions reductions goals by funding a project in a different country. According to a draft negotiating text, governments are still at odds over a range of issues, including to what extent credits can be rolled over from an earlier climate treaty, the Kyoto Protocol.

The governments are also negotiating rules for how they should report emissions reductions policies and [the financing that developed countries provide to developing countries](#). In one of the most contentious topics at the conference, governments have begun talks on a new goal for the amount of climate financing that developed nations should provide to developing ones. Most of the world's developing nations, including China, India and South Africa, backed a demand last week for \$1.3 trillion annually by 2030. Western officials say they doubt they can deliver such a large amount, particularly when China is resisting entreaties to also provide funds.

"Developed countries do not want a robust process, but rather some workshops," said Zaheer Fakir, a South African official who is helping lead talks on the new goal.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Climate pledges built on flawed data?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/interactive/2021/greenhouse-gas-emissions-pledges-data/?itid=hp-top-table-main">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/interactive/2021/greenhouse-gas-emissions-pledges-data/?itid=hp-top-table-main</a>
GIST	<p>Malaysia's latest catalogue of its greenhouse gas emissions to the United Nations reads like a report from a parallel universe. The <a href="#">285-page document</a> suggests that Malaysia's trees are absorbing carbon four times faster than similar forests in neighboring Indonesia.</p> <p>The surprising claim has allowed the country to subtract over 243 million tons of carbon dioxide from its 2016 inventory — slashing 73 percent of emissions from its bottom line.</p> <p>Across the world, many countries underreport their greenhouse gas emissions in their reports to the United Nations, a Washington Post investigation has found. An examination of 196 country reports reveals a giant gap between what nations declare their emissions to be versus the greenhouse gases they are sending into the atmosphere. The gap ranges from at least 8.5 billion to as high as 13.3 billion tons a year of underreported emissions — big enough to move the needle on how much the Earth will warm.</p> <p>The plan to save the world from the worst of climate change is built on data. But the data the world is relying on is inaccurate.</p>

“If we don’t know the state of emissions today, we don’t know whether we’re cutting emissions meaningfully and substantially,” said Rob Jackson, a professor at Stanford University and chair of the [Global Carbon Project](#), a collaboration of hundreds of researchers. “The atmosphere ultimately is the truth. The atmosphere is what we care about. The concentration of methane and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is what’s affecting climate.”

At the low end, the gap is larger than the yearly emissions of the United States. At the high end, it approaches the emissions of China and comprises 23 percent of humanity’s total contribution to the planet’s warming, The Post found.

As tens of thousands of people [are convening in Glasgow](#) for what may be the largest-ever meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also known as COP26, the numbers they are using to help guide the world’s effort to curb greenhouse gases represent a flawed road map.

That means the challenge is even larger than world leaders have acknowledged.

“In the end, everything becomes a bit of a fantasy,” said [Philippe Ciais](#), a scientist with France’s Laboratory of Climate and Environmental Sciences who tracks emissions based on satellite data. “Because between the world of reporting and the real world of emissions, you start to have large discrepancies.”

The UNFCCC collects country reports and oversees the Paris agreement, which brought the world together to progressively reduce emissions in 2015. The U.N. agency attributed the gap that The Post identified to “the application of different reporting formats and inconsistency in the scope and timeliness of reporting (such as between developed and developing countries, or across developing countries).”

When asked if the United Nations plans on addressing the gap, spokesman Alexander Saier said in an email it is continuing its efforts to strengthen the reporting process.

“However, we do acknowledge that more needs to be done, including finding ways to provide support to developing country Parties to improve their institutional and technical capacities.”

The gap comprises vast amounts of missing carbon dioxide and methane emissions as well as smaller amounts of powerful synthetic gases. It is the result of questionably drawn rules, incomplete reporting in some countries and apparently willful mistakes in others — and the fact that in some cases, humanity’s full impacts on the planet are not even required to be reported.

The Post’s analysis is based on a data set it built from emissions figures countries [reported to the United Nations](#) in a [variety of formats](#). To overcome the problem of missing years of data, reporters used a statistical model to estimate the emissions each country would have reported in 2019, then compared that total to [other scientific data sets](#) measuring global greenhouse gases.

The analysis found at least 59 percent of the gap stems from how countries account for emissions from land, a unique sector in that it can both help and harm the climate. Land can draw in carbon as plants grow and soils store it away — or it can all go back up into the atmosphere as forests are logged or burn and as peat-rich bogs are drained and start to emit large amounts of carbon dioxide.

A key area of controversy is that many countries attempt to offset the emissions from burning fossil fuels by claiming that carbon is absorbed by land within their borders. U.N. rules allow countries, such as China, Russia and the United States, each to subtract more than half a billion tons of annual emissions in this manner, and in the future could allow these and other countries to continue to release significant emissions while claiming to be “net zero.”

In other words, much of the gap is driven by subtractions countries have made on their balance sheets. Many scientists say countries should only claim these greenhouse gas reductions when they take clear action, as opposed to claiming natural forest regrowth unrelated to national policies.

And some of this carbon absorption isn't even happening — or at least not on the scale that countries assert.

Malaysia, for example, released 422 million tons of greenhouse gases in 2016, placing it among the world's top 25 emitters that year, [according to data compiled by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#). But because Malaysia claims its trees are consuming vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, its reported emissions to the United Nations are just 81 million tons, less than those of the small European nation of Belgium.

The Post found that methane emissions comprise a second major portion of the missing greenhouse gases in the U.N. database. Independent scientific data sets show between 57 million and 76 million tons more of human-caused methane emissions hitting the atmosphere than U.N. country reports do. That converts to between 1.6 billion and 2.1 billion tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions.

[Scientific research](#) indicates that countries are undercounting methane of all kinds: [in the oil and gas sector](#), where it leaks from pipelines and other sources; [in agriculture](#), where it wafts upward from the burps and waste of cows and other ruminant animals; and [in human waste](#), where landfills are a major source.

European Union officials estimate that rapid reductions in methane could trim [at least 0.2 degrees Celsius](#) from overall global temperature rise by 2050. [More than 100 nations](#) have now signed onto the newly formed Global Methane Pledge, an initiative launched by the United States and the E.U., which aims to cut emissions 30 percent by the end of the decade. But some of the world's biggest methane emitters, including China and Russia, have yet to join to pact.

President Biden told delegates meeting in Glasgow that [cutting methane emissions](#) is essential to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

“One of the most important things we can do in this decisive decade — to keep 1.5 degrees in reach — is reduce our methane emissions as quickly as possible,” Biden said.

A new generation of sophisticated satellites that can measure greenhouse gases are now orbiting Earth, and they can detect massive emissions leaks. Data from the International Energy Agency (IEA) [lists](#) Russia as the world's top oil and gas methane emitter, but that's not what Russia reports to the United Nations. Its official numbers fall millions of tons shy of what independent scientific analyses show, [a Post investigation found](#). Many oil and gas producers in the Persian Gulf region, such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, also report very small levels of oil and gas methane emission that don't line up with other scientific data sets.

“It's hard to imagine how policymakers are going to pursue ambitious climate actions if they're not getting the right data from national governments on how big the problem is,” said Glenn Hurowitz, chief executive of [Mighty Earth](#), an environmental advocacy group.

Meanwhile, fluorinated gases, which are exclusively human-made, also are underreported significantly. Known as “F-gases,” they are used in air conditioning, refrigeration and the electricity industry. But The Post found that dozens of countries don't report these emissions at all — a major shortcoming since some of these potent greenhouse gases are a growing part of the world's climate problem.

Vietnam, for example, reported that its emissions of fluorinated gases plunged between 2013 and 2016, to 23 thousand tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Asked about the 2016 estimate — which is 99.8 percent lower than what's indicated in one key [scientific emissions data set](#) used by The Post — Vietnamese officials said more recent reports assume fluorinated gases do not escape from air conditioning and refrigeration systems. But they do: [U.S. supermarkets](#) lose an average of 25 percent of their fluorinated refrigerants each year.

Many problems causing the gap in emissions statistics stem from the U.N. reporting system. Developed countries have [one set of standards](#), while developing countries [have another](#), with wide latitude to decide how and what and when they report. The difference in reporting reflects the reality that the developed nations are historically responsible for most of the greenhouse gases that have built up in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution, and that they have greater technical capacity to analyze their emissions than poorer nations.

Even when countries do report their emissions, the U.N. data can be peppered with inaccuracies. The data set, for instance, shows that in 2010, land in the Central African Republic absorbed 1.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide, an immense and improbable amount that would effectively offset the annual emissions of Russia.

When The Post pointed out the Central African Republic's figure to the UNFCCC, the agency acknowledged that "the reported data may require further clarification, and we will reach out to the Party for additional information and update the data in the GHG (greenhouse gases) data interface accordingly." The Central African Republic did not respond to The Post's requests for clarification.

"The commitments of the Paris agreement without measurements of actual atmospheric emissions are like the parties going on diets without ever having to weigh themselves," said Ray Weiss, an atmospheric scientist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego.

### **At the verge of the abyss**

The emission reports are so unwieldy that the United Nations does not have a complete database to track country emissions. Some 45 countries have not reported any new greenhouse gas numbers since 2009.

Algeria, a major oil and gas producer, has not reported since 2000. War-torn Libya, another key energy exporter, doesn't report its emissions at all. The central Asian nation of Turkmenistan, the economy of which is powered by oil and gas, hasn't reported an inventory since [2010](#) — though it has been [repeatedly faulted](#) in recent years for major leaks of methane.

Australia is removing substantial carbon dioxide emissions from megafires, which have [worsened due to climate change](#), from its annual totals. A [study](#) by Ciaï and his colleagues found that the country also underreported its 2016 emissions of nitrous oxide gas, a powerful warming agent that principally comes from farming, by a factor of four to seven.

Drawing on emissions data from the Food and Agriculture Organization, The Post found a similar gap: three times as much nitrous oxide as Australia's reports to the United Nations.

Australia's Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources disputed the idea that it is not including wildfires' carbon emissions, saying in a statement it uses "a smoothing process ... designed to draw out trends in anthropogenic net emissions" from its forests over time.

The work of Ciaï and his colleagues, the Australian department's press office wrote in an email, "is an exploration of newly emerging modelling techniques," and "there is considerable uncertainty about how these results should be interpreted."

The largest of the outside inventories considered in The Post's analysis — a research team's [estimate](#) based on the Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research — reports up to 57.4 billion tons of annual greenhouse gas emissions. Other major scientific inventories present similar totals. Yet the most recent country U.N. reports only amount to 41.3 billion tons when land and forest claims are taken into account.

The gap does not amount to 16 billion tons, however, because many of the country reports are outdated, some of the U.N. information is incorrect and no countries take responsibility for emissions from international air travel and shipping. The Post's analysis accounts for these problems, finding a gap between 8.5 billion and 13.3 billion tons.



Climate negotiators have known for decades that this data-gathering process is flawed, but instead they have focused on persuading global leaders to engage in serious talks and take real steps to rein in emissions.

“It doesn’t surprise me at all that you’re finding all kinds of discrepancies or that countries are playing some games there,” said Dan Reifsnyder, a former U.S. official who co-chaired negotiations for the Paris agreement. “If you want to think about strengthening the whole process, the whole climate process, this is a very, very fertile area to explore.”

While the Paris agreement calls for a [more transparent system](#) by the end of 2024, it could take until 2030 to get to robust reporting — an eternity compared with the tight time frame the world needs to get it right. The world has already warmed at least 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) compared with preindustrial levels, leaving a very narrow path to avoid crossing the dangerous warming thresholds of 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius.

Scientists say that emissions, which are still rising, [must be halved](#) in this decade and not after, in what will have to be the biggest collective action among the world’s countries in human history. Ultimately, it’s not the politics, the accounting or the pledges that will determine how much the planet warms but the hard numbers of atmospheric science: the parts per million of greenhouse gases in the air.

In a recent [interview](#), U.N. Secretary General António Guterres said he hoped nations would recognize the implications of their actions.

“There is a growing consciousness that we are really at the verge of the abyss,” he said. “And when you are at the verge of the abyss, you need to be very careful about your next step.”

### **A giant gap**

In early 2020, Phillipe Ciais, the French emissions expert, could not access his lab at the University of Paris-Saclay, a research cluster outside the French capital. The lab sat idle while the coronavirus pandemic raged, so Ciais hunkered down at home and did what he always does: a prodigious amount of research.

That year alone, [more than 100 scientific papers](#) emerged with his name on them, many devoted to cracking some of the hardest problems in climate science: What is the world really emitting? And how much is the planet — in the form of its land, forests and soils — helping to blunt the force of the world’s pollution?

In the spring of 2020, the lockdown sent carbon dioxide emissions plummeting — along with oil prices. Ciais realized it was a unique moment to study country emissions.

Ciais started adding together U.N. emissions reports and comparing them with satellite and atmospheric measurements of forest growth, methane and nitrous oxide emissions from the world’s largest emitters. He expected a gap and wondered what it would look like. But when he saw what instead was a chasm, he instantly realized the implication for the politics of the Paris agreement.

“It’s already hard to make sense of the pledges,” he said. “If the baseline is underreported, the percentage of emission reductions that you get will be flawed.”

Ciais’s 2021 [study](#), conducted with Zhu Deng of Tsinghua University in Beijing and 31 other researchers, is still undergoing peer review, but it, along with his data set, is publicly available.

The data uses some of the same country reports The Post analyzed, along with the Global Carbon Project’s already-published atmospheric data sets. But it only looks at individual countries, not the whole world as The Post has done. Still, it shows major gaps between how those countries report their emissions and what is actually in the atmosphere. In particular, Ciais found that some of the world’s top emitters, including

both wealthy and developing countries — Russia and Indonesia, the E.U. and Brazil — are underestimating emissions of key gases.

In one of the most striking cases, Cia's study found that methane leakage from fossil fuel operations in the oil states of the Persian Gulf could be as much as seven times more than what they officially report.

Cia's research has also found that the "carbon sinks" — the land absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> — that countries claim as a subtraction from their total emissions actually represent just a fraction of the amount that the world's forests absorb. But, for Cia, this finding is a mixed blessing: On the one hand, the Earth is working harder to mitigate carbon pollution than we may realize. On the other hand, droughts, wildfires and other major disturbances tied to climate change quickly can release much of this carbon again.

Greenhouse gases released by humanity's ceaseless activity are hard to catalogue: They are invisible, and they are produced by nearly every aspect of our lives. The homes we live in, the vehicles we drive, the foods we eat, the products we buy all contribute to the atmosphere's greenhouse gas burden either directly or indirectly.

The bulk of emissions comes from burning fossil fuels, which can be tallied with reasonable precision. But more than a third are not easily tracked, including the emissions that arise when forests are chopped down or lost to fire, peatlands are drained, or excess fertilizer is spread on agricultural fields.

It is no wonder to Cia that the world's leaders have a hard time accounting for the complex give-and-take of carbon and nitrogen between the Earth and its atmosphere. But the system the United Nations has established to tally these emissions makes it even harder.

A key problem is that the U.N. reporting guidelines [don't currently require](#) any atmospheric or satellite measurements, known as a "top-down" approach. Rather, [the guidelines](#) ask scientific bookkeepers in each country to quantify levels of a particular activity. This includes the number of cows, whose burps makes up 4 percent of total greenhouse gases, the amount of fertilizer used or how much peatland was converted to cropland in a given year. Then, countries multiply those units by an "emissions factor" — an estimate of how much gas each activity produces — to determine a total for everything from [belching cows](#) to tailpipe emissions.

But those counts easily can be wrong, and so can the emissions factors. When that happens, emissions reporting becomes little more than guesswork, a case of "garbage in, garbage out."

### **Basements and ballrooms**

Malaysia's skewed data vividly illustrates the high stakes countries face as they confront the growing pressure to reduce emissions while managing the very real economic consequences that process triggers.

In the past decade, some in the Southeast Asian nation have gone to great lengths to counter the scientific conclusion that its oil palm industry is releasing huge amounts of carbon. The E.U. has restricted palm-oil biofuels on the grounds that it is helping drive deforestation, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection has [banned palm oil imports from two of Malaysia's biggest producers](#) in the past year and a half after concluding that their plantation laborers were subjected to abusive working conditions.

In 2016, the last year Malaysia has reported its numbers to the United Nations, the world's experts on peatlands convened in Kuching, the capital of the Malaysian state of Sarawak, for the 15th International Peat Congress on the vast tropical island of Borneo.

Jenny Goldstein, then a new faculty member at Cornell University, walked into the five-star Pullman Kuching Hotel and found herself in the midst of a propaganda war to make the controversial oil palm industry look good.

There were more participants from the palm oil industry than scientists at the normally staid academic conference. Industry meetings were held in a giant hotel ballroom, while the scientific presentations took place in the basement — rooms so small that some scientists had to sit on the floor.

Out of curiosity, Goldstein ventured upstairs.

“There were almost all men sitting in these ballrooms listening to presentations about how great Malaysian peatlands have been managed for oil palm,” recalled Goldstein, now a global development professor at Cornell. In the basement, world peat experts were presenting cutting-edge research on the massive carbon bombs peatlands contain.

Sarawak boasts a rich ecosystem of peat swamp forests that are home to orangutans, crocodiles and 100-foot-high ramin trees springing from the soggy earth. But across Sarawak and other regions of Malaysia, 4,000 square miles of these forests — close to the size of Connecticut — have been drained in recent decades. Much of this land is sown with plantations for palm oil, commonly used in products ranging from biofuels to processed foods, soaps and makeup.

When peatland is drained, it releases a rapid pulse of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as the once-waterlogged plants’ remains degrade with the sudden exposure to air. Emissions then [continue for decades](#), until all the peat is gone.

The conference was a historic occasion, held in the tropics for the first time in its 62-year history, and hosted by the Malaysian Peat Society with the Sarawak government’s [support](#).

The leader of the conference, Sarawak Tropical Peat Research Institute Director Lulie Melling, has asserted that oil palm developers can plant on peatland without releasing huge amounts of carbon. She holds a PhD in environmental science from Japan’s Hokkaido University.

Melling said in an interview with The Post that other peat scientists, who have studied peat in other parts of the world, don’t understand the unique qualities of the peat in her region.

“It’s like comparing cheesecake with Swiss cheese,” she said.

She has often cast the scientific debate in nationalist or anti-colonialist terms. Earlier this year, she told the New Sarawak Tribune, an English-language newspaper, that the Tropical Peat Research Institute was at the “front line on behalf of the state to inform the public that agriculture practices on peatlands have minimal impact on their roles as carbon sources.”

“I single handedly, backed by my small laboratory, pioneered and published the groundbreaking research work on peat use and [greenhouse gas] emission to rebut the maligned western detractors on the use of peat as arable land,” she said.

In a bid to boost efficiency, mills are built close to large palm tree plantations, with trucks lining up to deliver the palm fruits that will then be converted into palm oil.

Melling’s pro-industry stance took scientists at the conference by surprise, Goldstein said, as did her use of vulgar language in public remarks.

Melling has said she uses suggestive language to make her science memorable.

“I first dabbled with humour to get my point across in 2007, when I organised a soil science seminar entitled, Big hole, small hole & KY Jelly,” she said in [an April 2016 interview](#) with TTG Associations, an Asian Pacific trade group.

In the wake of the conference, some scientists were stunned to read in news reports that the event had presented new evidence that palm oil development can proceed without major environmental disruption.

“Malaysia challenges the world over palm oil peatland,” [said](#) the English-language Jakarta Post.

In response, 139 scientists — including Goldstein — objected to the articles, noting an abundance of peer-reviewed studies on peatland emissions. [The letter](#) was published by scientific journal Global Change Biology.

“The oil palm industry is basically an arm of the government,” Goldstein said.

### **A biting heat**

Nicholas Mujah Ason has seen both the cause and the effect of global warming: the sea of palm oil plantations surrounding him and the rainforest that never cools.

Mujah, who has lived in the state of Sarawak most of his life, has been fighting the development since the early 1980s, when he was first jailed for protesting the encroachment of loggers.

“It’s not that we hate palm oil,” he said. “We hate how palm oil has been planted into our land.”

His family has lived deep in the rainforest for eight generations, and the 62-year-old has been involved in multiple legal actions as the secretary general of the Sarawak Dayak Iban Association, an Indigenous rights group.

More recently, Mujah’s home village has been plagued by flash floods because peatland that once absorbed the rains has been drained. It’s now hard to say when the summer begins because it’s hot year-round — and the heat stings.

“It’s not like a normal heat that we faced before,” he said. “You’ll feel the biting heat, and your skin will be burned.”

Malaysia’s government has downplayed the palm oil industry’s climate impact across several categories in its U.N. reports.

In 2016, Malaysia [claimed](#) that it had not converted a single acre to cropland.

“This is patently untrue,” said Susan Page, an expert on peatlands at the University of Leicester who also signed the letter objecting to presentations at the 2016 International Peat Congress.

In fact, in a [peer-reviewed study](#) funded by the Malaysian government itself, scientists documented the expansion of an oil palm plantation atop carbon-rich peatland in Sarawak in the very same year as Malaysia’s latest report. The study estimated that 138 tons of carbon dioxide were released per hectare — a unit equivalent to 2.47 acres — in converted areas. In other words, a giant pulse of emissions occurred due to land conversion. At The Post’s request, the geospatial intelligence firm [Esri](#) measured the total expansion at 494 acres.

It was happening all across the country that year. Drawing on a [satellite-based data set](#) from Ciais and his colleagues, including Wei Li of Tsinghua University in China, Esri found a net addition of about 410,000 acres of palm oil plantations in 2016, though it is unclear how many of these were on peatland.

The scientific evidence suggests the country is also underestimating emissions from drained peatland, which occur in the years after the land is converted. Using an [outdated estimate of how much peatlands emit](#), the nation calculated that its croplands atop drained peat emitted just 29 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2016.

John Couwenberg, a peatlands expert from the University of Greifswald in Germany, said Malaysia’s estimate is “way too low.” He reworked the numbers for The Post and got a total of 111 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions. A [2017 study](#) agreed, finding a figure of nearly 100 million tons of carbon dioxide per year for all of Malaysia. In other words, Malaysia’s peatland emissions could easily be about three times as high as the country is claiming.

And then comes the biggest problem of all.

Malaysia [claims](#) an annual forest carbon sink of over 243 million tons from just about 68,000 square miles of forested area. That's not far from what neighboring Indonesia [claims](#) for a forest [more than five times its size](#).

U.N. technical reviewers have questioned what they called Malaysia's "[unusually large figure](#)" for forest carbon storage and said they were unable to reproduce it despite using three separate methods. Several scientists told The Post that the figures would only make sense if all of Malaysia's forests were growing at a rate similar to that seen in young saplings — which they aren't.

"It sounds like there is an error because it is completely impossible to think of the entire area of forests across Malaysia accumulating the equivalent of young tropical forests," said Jérôme Chave, a research director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research who has [published data](#) on carbon storage in Malaysian forests.

The Malaysian government said its reports comply with U.N. guidelines and are subject to rigorous review but did not respond to detailed questions about the country's land sector reporting.

"The information including the one that you are asking were all subjected to an intense review processes (it took us 7 months) conducted by the UNFCCC experts themselves who are members from all over the world," said Mohamad Firdaus Nawawi, an official with the country's Ministry of Environment and Water, which prepares the documents, by email.

"When you walk over peatlands, your feet sink down into thousands of years of carbon," said Hurowitz, the Mighty Earth chief executive. "Sarawak has sent its peatland destruction advocates to scientific, government and corporate events for years to present a wildly distorted picture of destroying these ultrarich carbon ecosystems."

Under the Paris agreement, Malaysia [has pledged](#) to reduce the carbon intensity of its economy 45 percent below what it was in 2005 by the end of the decade. Thus far, the country claims the forestry sector is making the biggest contribution to its emissions cuts — which underscores just how problematic the country's numbers truly are.

"It's not surprising to me that governments are trying to hide pollution," Hurowitz said, "but it's shameful they're getting away with it."

### **Tolerating disarray**

Jackson, the Stanford professor, is driven by a sense that data can save the planet from peril. He chairs the Global Carbon Project, the world's most ambitious scientific effort to gather data that explains the global carbon cycle — how the planet absorbs and releases carbon dioxide. Scientists analyze the same kind of data that countries are supposed to report to the United Nations, but they bring skepticism and a tool that the world body doesn't apply: direct measurements of gases in the atmosphere.

Jackson believes that the atmosphere is the ultimate check on what countries report — and what they pledge. The gap in the data is an urgent problem.

Earlier this year, the United Nations published a "[synthesis report](#)," which forecasts the effect of countries' climate promises on future emissions and the planet's temperature.

The report describes those promises as "covering" the vast majority of global emissions, showing numbers more than 10 billion tons above what countries actually report when all sectors are included, according to The Post's calculations. The United Nations declined to provide its data set to support the number, but did explain a number of steps by which countries numbers' had been adjusted.

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>“It is surprising to see that the authors of the U.N. report did not use the original data reported by each country,” said Ciaia, who also contributes to the Global Carbon Project.</p> <p>Saier, the UNFCCC spokesman, defended the approach in an email, saying that “there is indeed a small upscaling.”</p> <p>In a sense, the UNFCCC adjusted the country numbers to match what science says is being emitted: It closed the gap that The Post found.</p> <p>From a political perspective, there may not be any other option. Without requiring satellite or atmospheric measurements, richer and poorer countries alike are likely to underreport for years to come.</p> <p>After all, in the end there is no way to make the Paris agreement, emissions cuts or accurate emissions reports mandatory. Every country reports what it reports and promises what it promises.</p> <p>“I think that’s part of the reason this is all tolerated, is the sense that, at least the countries are providing something and participating and thinking about it,” said Jackson.</p> <p>“That’s why people tolerate this disarray, because the alternative is for them to walk away.”</p> <p>But Jackson is an optimist.</p> <p>“I believe information is powerful. Data and information have not nudged the climate world as quickly as I wished it had,” he said. “But I’m still naively hoping to leave the world better for my kids than I found it.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Passes first substantial snow of year</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/mountain-passes-get-first-substantial-snow-of-the-year-with-more-to-come/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/mountain-passes-get-first-substantial-snow-of-the-year-with-more-to-come/</a>
GIST	<p>The first significant snow of the season fell on Western Washington mountains this weekend, bringing nearly two feet of snow to some areas.</p> <p>As of Sunday afternoon, Mount Baker and other high elevations had received 23 inches during the previous two days, according to the National Weather Service. Stevens Pass received about 11 inches, and Snoqualmie Pass saw 5 inches, most of it coming Saturday afternoon and Sunday.</p> <p>“It was pretty much right on target” for November, said Dustin Guy, meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Seattle. Snow levels dropped to 2,500 feet as cold air moved into the region.</p> <p>“It was the first of many to come,” he said.</p> <p>Roads through major mountain passes were open Sunday, with traction tire advisories or requirements in place from the Washington State Department of Transportation.</p> <p>A winter weather advisory remained in effect until 4 a.m. Monday. Forecasters expected the system to bring another 4 to 8 inches of snow to the central Cascades, and 5 to 10 inches in the north and south Cascades.</p> <p>“Be careful as you’re heading over the passes because these wintry conditions will be carrying on,” Guy said.</p> <p>Around Puget Sound, Sunday saw on-and-off showers with winds gusting up to 35 mph at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The rain was expected to taper off late Sunday night, and most of Monday should be dry, Guy said.</p>



	<p>But the respite was expected to be brief, with another storm system arriving Monday night that could bring more mountain snow, and rain in lower elevations.</p> <p>Cooler, wet systems should continue through midweek, Guy said, interrupted by breaks between 12 and 18 hours of calmer conditions.</p> <p>Later in the week, a warmer storm system is expected to sweep into the region and snow levels could rise to 7,000 or 8,000 feet on Thursday.</p> <p>“We tend to flip-flop a lot in November,” Guy said. “It’s going to be a bit of a roller coaster weather-wise.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Houston officials worried; crowd control</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/us/astroworld-travis-scott-deaths.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/us/astroworld-travis-scott-deaths.html</a>
GIST	<p>HOUSTON — Concert organizers and Houston city officials knew that the crowd at a music festival planned by Travis Scott, a favorite local rapper turned megastar, could be difficult to control. That’s what happened two years earlier, the last time Mr. Scott held his Astroworld Festival.</p> <p>For months, they braced themselves, adding dozens more officers from the Houston Police Department and more private security hired by Live Nation, the concert organizer.</p> <p>The Houston police chief, who knows Mr. Scott personally and felt the musician had been trying to do good for his hometown, said that he visited Mr. Scott in his trailer before his show on Friday and conveyed concerns about the energy in the crowd, according to a person with knowledge of the chief’s account.</p> <p>His show that day included very devoted fans, the chief, Troy Finner, said he relayed to Mr. Scott.</p> <p>That energy had been building for months among fans who were drawn to see Mr. Scott because of that atmosphere and by the exuberance of seeing music live again after the pandemic hiatus. They flew in from California and Colorado, drove from Dallas and San Antonio. Tickets went for hundreds of dollars. Elementary school children were among the 50,000 fans.</p> <p>“We literally flew down just for Astroworld,” said Jesse Dahl, who came from Denver with his 9-year-old son for the show. “I’ve had the tickets for months.”</p> <p>But the anticipation gave way to dread almost as soon as Mr. Scott took the stage at 9 p.m. on Friday as the crowd surged uncontrollably and the worst fears of officials and concert organizers came to pass. Two teenagers, ages 14 and 16, were among the <a href="#">eight who died in the crush and chaos</a>.</p> <p>By Sunday, the Houston Police and Fire Departments had taken over the investigation into what took place during the festival at the NRG Park. They had created a rough timeline of events, officials said, seeking to piece together the movements of the swelling crowd and the actions of the private security personnel and medical staff on hand, as well as the city police officers and emergency medical workers.</p> <p>A spokeswoman for the Houston Police Department declined to comment on their timeline of events or on Chief Finner’s private conversations, citing the pending investigation.</p> <p>The show ended on Friday night 30 minutes earlier than scheduled, but nearly 40 minutes after a “mass casualty event” had been declared by city officials. One question surrounding the tragedy was whether the officials could have stopped the show sooner; they said that doing so would have had its own perils, including inciting a riot.</p> <p>Fire Chief Samuel Peña said on Sunday that Mr. Scott and the organizers could have stepped in and paused the show.</p>

“The one person who can really call for and get a tactical pause when something goes wrong is that performer. They have that bully pulpit and they have a responsibility,” Chief Peña said in a telephone interview on Sunday. “If somebody would have said, ‘Hey, shut this thing down and turn on the lights until this thing gets corrected’ — and that coming from the person with the mic — I think could have been very helpful.”

Mr. Scott and Live Nation declined to respond to specific questions, but they have said they will be cooperating with the investigation. Mr. Scott, one of the biggest names in rap music with a huge social media following and his own record label, said in an Instagram video that he did not know how bad things had gotten in the crowd.

Astroworld had been highly anticipated for the better part of the year.

Fans began buying tickets — with some paying \$380 a piece or more — months before the show. By the summer, officials and event organizers were already in discussions about the event.

The concert organizers prepared two lengthy emergency plan documents, one addressing the overall response to emergencies like extreme weather, an active shooter or a riot, and another dealing with the medical response. The plans, obtained by The New York Times, addressed broad concerns related to Astroworld.

“Based on the site’s layout and numerous past experiences,” a 56-page security plan read, “the potential for multiple alcohol/drug related incidents, possible evacuation needs, and the ever-present threat of a mass casualty situation are identified as key concerns.”

Elsewhere, it advised staff to “notify Event Control of a suspected deceased victim utilizing the code ‘Smurf,’” the report read. “Never use the term ‘dead’ or ‘deceased’ over the radio.” It was not clear if that protocol was followed.

As fans were converging on Houston on Thursday, Houston Fire Department officials were conducting a walk-through of the space, an outdoor area that could hold 200,000, officials said. “Our fire marshals went out there and had them adjust some of their pyrotechnics because they didn’t match the submitted plan,” Chief Peña said in the interview.

Hours later, beginning in the dark of the early morning, people began lining up to get inside. Dupri Johnson arrived for work at NRG Park at 3 a.m. More than 1,000 people were already waiting for the gates to open.

By the time they did, at around 10 a.m., people were so excited, they rushed forward. “They were not walking. They ran in,” he said. “It just seemed a little chaotic.”

At noon, Sami Anjum arrived to begin his work as a field medic for the show. An emergency medical technician and a clinical researcher, Mr. Anjum had learned a few days before that he would be working the festival for a contractor. He went anticipating a busy night.

“I’ve actually attended the event as an attendee in 2019. So I know how the crowd wasn’t being controlled,” he said. That year, crowds overwhelmed staff, breaking through gates and rushing the entrance. Three people were injured.

Outside the venue, the Houston Fire Department had positioned about 20 ambulances in anticipation that they might be needed.

It would be a few more hours before a large number of patients began arriving at the medical tent. Other performances at the festival, which was taking place on two stages throughout the day, proceeded as usual.

“We thought it was pretty chill,” said Alex McLemore, 26, who described the scene in the early afternoon in a V.I.P. lounge section.

Event organizers had planned to deploy security personnel throughout the arena, including along nearby roads, gates, fence lines and V.I.P. areas, according to the 56-page planning report. They also set up imposing perimeters: eight-foot fencing with scrim, bike racks, snow fencing and concrete bollards, meant to maintain crowd control. Those fences and barricades were stronger and more robust than they were in 2019, officials said.

Security guards were given a list of visible signs to determine whether patrons were on the verge of needing medical care, including unsteady gait, confusion, vomiting and loss of consciousness. “Many incidents will be minor, and a few will be complex,” the report advised.

The first influx of those seeking medical attention began around 3:30 p.m., Mr. Anjum said. But nothing seemed out of the ordinary for a concert with young fans, where overdoses are not uncommon.

A 22-page medical plan prepared by ParaDocs called for a main medical tent with two emergency room physicians, six registered nurses, two paramedics and nine emergency medical technicians, along with people to track and triage patients. There were 30 cots, 12 tables and two wheelchairs in the main tent; other smaller medical tents were positioned around the event.

But the number of people in need of medical care — which grew to more than 300 and possibly many more — appeared to overwhelm those resources even before Mr. Scott began performing.

By 8:15 p.m., the medical staff on hand said they were unable to document patients because there were so many who needed help. “Many patients were last seen conscious more than 20 minutes prior to receiving any medical attention,” Mr. Anjum said. They began triage.

Paramedics struggled to keep up with the number of people needing naloxone, a drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. Among them was at least one security guard who lost consciousness after reporting that a person had stuck him in the neck with a needle as he was trying to aid another person who had fainted.

The amount of naloxone administered may never be known, Chief Peña said, because it was being carried and used by so many at the event, including the event medical personnel, emergency medical workers and the police.

An official with ParaDocs disputed that the event was understaffed or that serious medical problems got out of hand before 8 p.m.

A clock counted down the moments until Mr. Scott’s arrival. Crowds surged to the main stage, pressing in not from front to back, but from the sides, according to Chief Peña.

Still, for many in the crowd, the show was still just a show, full of excitement and anticipation.

“We ended up in the middle somewhere,” said Armon Sayadian, 21, who came with his friend, Heath Bacon, 20, from Central Valley, Calif.

The music paused around 9:30 p.m. as an ambulance made its way into the crowd. It was around that time that Mr. Anjum got his first call for cardiac arrest. It took 10 minutes to get through the crowd to the patient, he said.

As the music was stopped, two men who appeared to be part of Mr. Scott’s entourage approached him onstage, according to a video of the concert that has since been taken down. Mr. Scott shooed them away.

“Y’all know what you came to do,” he said, turning to the crowd, before the music started up again. Mr. Scott asked the tens of thousands in front of him to make “the ground shake.”

The words sent a bolt of energy to the already frenzied fans, Mr. Sayadian said.

Everyone around them started jumping, stomping on the ground. They joined in, carried along with the mass of bodies. “You kind of have to,” Mr. Sayadian said.

“You become one with the crowd,” echoed his friend, Mr. Bacon.

By then, the city ambulances that had been placed around the venue were collecting patients and more were called in. Sixty-two ambulances in all would eventually respond.

Guillermo Garcia, a 25-year-old warehouse worker who drove from Dallas, said people collapsed all around him. And few rushed to their aid.

“People usually fall and you just pick people up,” he said, recalling his experiences attending the Astroworld event in previous years. “This time, people couldn’t do that. There were too many people. You could not move. Everywhere you were, people were pushing you. Every time he performs, people get excited.”

Mr. Scott managed to get through another song before he paused the music again.

“There were so many ambulances and police cars,” Mr. Sayadian said.

For roughly 90 minutes, starting at 9:30 p.m., Mr. Anjum said it felt as if he were doing chest compressions nonstop. Patients were laid out on the concrete.

By 10 p.m., people were trampling over each other inside the show, an act so inhumane, said Afnan Hasan, 18, that it made him recoil in anger. “We were trying to do our best to lift them up,” he said. “Other people were not stepping up.”

They had gotten so close to Mr. Scott in the crowd that they could make eye contact, and in a last-ditch effort to save people in distress, Mr. Hasan and a friend waved and yelled in Mr. Scott’s direction.

“We were trying to scream at him and get his attention,” Mr. Hasan said, reliving the moment as he imitated pulling people up from the floor. “We were like, ‘People are passing out here. We have, like, piles of people.’ He could not hear us. It was too loud.”

A security guard guided Mr. Hasan and his friend away from the stampede via the V.I.P. lounge and out into the streets.

As he left, Mr. Hasan saw a young man on his knees, and watched as another man stepped on him with brute force.

The show ended at roughly 10:15 p.m. Officials said the venue cleared out without incident. The exits were wide enough. Everyone was gone within an hour.

By that point, Mr. Anjum said, they had long since run out of naloxone. Two dozen people had been taken to hospitals. Eight were dead. The causes of their deaths were still awaiting toxicology reports, a process that could last weeks.

For Mr. Hasan, the images of that night would be seared in his mind for at least that long. When he closes his eyes, he said, all he can see is the young man on his knees about to lose consciousness. His head is wobbling, as if he lacks the strength to lift it up.

	<p>“I kept telling people, ‘There is someone on the ground!’” he recalled. “‘Watch out!’”</p> <p>Mr. Hasan wondered who the man was, and if he made it home.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Eviction crisis unfolds step by step</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/us/evictions-crisis-us.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/us/evictions-crisis-us.html</a>
GIST	<p>In Indianapolis, eviction courts are packed as judges make their way through a monthslong backlog of cases. In Detroit, advocates are rushing to knock on the doors of tenants facing possible eviction. In Gainesville, Fla., landlords are filing evictions at a rapid pace as displaced tenants resort to relatives’ couches for places to sleep or seek cheaper rents outside the city.</p> <p>It is not the sudden surge of evictions that tenants and advocates feared after the Supreme Court ruled in August that President Biden’s extension of the eviction moratorium was unconstitutional. Instead, what’s emerging is a more gradual eviction crisis that is increasingly hitting communities across the country, especially those where the distribution of federal rental assistance has been slow, and where tenants have few protections.</p> <p>“For months we all used these terms like eviction ‘tsunami’ and ‘falling off the cliff,’” said Lee Camp, an attorney who represents tenants facing eviction in St. Louis. But those simple terms missed the complexity of the eviction process and the lack of reliable statistics to track it, he said. “It was not going to happen overnight. Certainly it would take weeks and months to play out.”</p> <p>And even now, experts say, the available numbers dramatically undercount the number of tenants being forced from their homes either through court-ordered evictions or informal ones, <a href="#">especially as rising rents make seeking new tenants increasingly profitable</a> for landlords.</p> <p>While the number of eviction filings remained at nearly half of prepandemic averages during the first two weeks of October, according to the <a href="#">Eviction Lab</a> at Princeton University, in the 31 cities and six states it tracks, the filings are also increasing.</p> <p>In the first two weeks of September, just after the moratorium ended, eviction filings increased by 10 percent from the first two weeks of August. In the first two weeks of October, evictions increased by nearly 14 percent from the first two weeks of the previous month.</p> <p>“In places that don’t have protections, these numbers are increasing pretty quickly,” said Peter Hepburn, a researcher at the Eviction Lab. “And we don’t know where the ceiling is.”</p> <p>Gene Sperling, the economist overseeing the Biden administration’s pandemic relief programs, credited the \$46.5 billion in federal rental assistance set aside by Congress last winter with mitigating the problem. More than two million payments have been made — nearly a million in August and September alone.</p> <p>Some jurisdictions have used part of the money to introduce programs that provide alternatives to eviction or legal assistance for tenants. Just over 37 percent of all renters in the country live in places that still have local eviction bans or are postponing eviction judgments pending rental assistance, according to the Urban Institute.</p> <p>But elsewhere, limited renter protections and limits in the distribution of rental assistance are spurring the increase in evictions.</p> <p>“No one should be sleeping well at night when there are still way too many painful, avoidable evictions,” said Mr. Sperling.</p>

In Indianapolis in late October, Pamela Brewer waited nervously for a hearing on her pending eviction in a courthouse packed with hundreds of other tenants. There, landlords have been piling new evictions onto a backlog of thousands of older ones from the pandemic that are just now being executed.

“The hallways were full, the outside was full coming up the steps, the foyer was full,” said Ms. Brewer, who is months behind on rent after losing her job on the assembly line at a home appliances manufacturer at the start of the pandemic. “You look around and everybody’s knees are shaking like, What’s going to happen?”

Ms. Brewer applied for rental assistance in September, but she said her application was rejected because she accidentally marked “no” in response to a question about whether she had been impacted by Covid-19.

Her appeal of the decision is pending, and she doesn’t know how much longer she has before the judge will approve the eviction.

“I’m in limbo,” said Ms. Brewer. “I’m about to get evicted. I’m 61 years old, and I don’t have anywhere to go.”

Some landlords say that the red tape of the rental assistance program has caused problems for them, too.

William Tran, who owns 38 properties in the Milwaukee area, said he is currently short \$40,000 in unpaid rent, as some of his tenants have struggled to navigate the application process and others face long delays.

“It’s just a really cumbersome process and it can be really overwhelming for a lot people,” said Mr. Tran.

Overall, though, landlords collected rent during the pandemic about as regularly as they did before the pandemic, according to data collected by the National Multifamily Housing Council, a landlord industry group.

Howard Spellman, a landlord with 37 rental units across California and New Mexico, said that his tenants who were behind on rent received rental assistance without much difficulty.

“I’ve done better during the pandemic because of the help from the government than in previous years,” said Mr. Spellman.

The true extent of the crisis facing tenants is understated by the available numbers on eviction, housing advocates and experts say. “The eviction avalanche is absolutely here across the country,” said Katie Goldstein, a housing justice campaign director with the Center for Popular Democracy.

There is no national database of evictions, and the haphazard patchwork of local policies and record-keeping methods in courts across the country poses severe obstacles to creating one. One-third of all U.S. counties have no available court eviction data at all, according to New America, a left-leaning think tank.

And most tenants are forced to leave their rental units not because of formal eviction proceedings, but because they’ve been illegally locked out or their utilities have been shut off, or because they want to avoid an eviction being added to their record by leaving on their own.

A 2015 study from Milwaukee found that there were two of these so-called informal evictions for every one formal eviction. A recent survey of low-income tenants in Washington State found that one in five tenants were subjected to a method of informal eviction during the pandemic, compared with one in eight before the pandemic.

In September 2020, just after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention extended its eviction moratorium, Antionette Cobb came home to find her St. Louis apartment almost entirely empty. She’d fallen behind on rent after losing her job as a housekeeper at a hotel months before because of the



pandemic. By August she had exhausted her savings. Ms. Cobb's landlord rejected her offer to pay over half of her \$550 rent for that month, she said, and decided to seize the property instead.

"My heart just dropped," she said, recalling the remnants of her furniture strewn around the apartment: the couch with its cushions removed; the box spring and headboard without a mattress on top; the legs of the coffee table without its glass top.

"I can't go to the store and buy things that I've had for years, stuff that my grandma gave me, picture frames," said Ms. Cobb. "It was heartbreaking, it was like I was nothing."

Ms. Cobb has been staying with a friend in Ohio and searching for a place in St. Louis that she can afford. But after months of looking, she hasn't yet found an apartment that she qualifies for with the income she makes from Instacart deliveries.

"Eviction is just one piece of a much larger problem," said Mr. Camp, the tenant attorney. "It is this access to available housing. It is the debt that has piled up on top of these families that have fallen behind over these months. It is a culmination of different factors that is just affecting housing stability overall."

Housing advocates say that the rental assistance program has failed to address these larger issues.

"Rental assistance was not designed for tenants; rental assistance was designed to stabilize an industry," said Tara Raghuveer, the director of KC Tenants, an advocacy organization in Kansas City, Mo., and the housing campaign director at People's Action, another progressive advocacy group.

Without increased protections for renters and interventions in the exploding rental market, tenants will continue to be displaced through the courts or otherwise, she argued.

June King was approved for over \$20,000 in rental assistance to cover months of rent she was unable to pay on her Gainesville apartment after she contracted a severe case of Covid that left her unable to return to her work as a nurse for seven months.

But in October, she found a note stuck on her door saying that her lease would not be renewed and that she had until Dec. 31 to get out.

She's been searching desperately for a place for her and her husband and two children to move to, but affordable options are slim.

"I'm really scared about being not able to find something and being left out there," said Ms. King. "Especially during the holidays."

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HEADLINE	11/07 China Xi rewrites past to steer China future
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/asia/china-xi-jinping.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/asia/china-xi-jinping.html</a>
GIST	<p>The <a href="#">glowing image</a> of China's top leader, Xi Jinping, greets visitors to museum exhibitions celebrating the country's decades of growth. Communist Party biographers have <a href="#">worshipfully chronicled</a> his rise, though he has given no hint of retiring. The party's newest official history devotes over a quarter of its 531 pages to his nine years in power.</p> <p>No Chinese leader in recent times has been more fixated than Mr. Xi on history and his place in it, and as he approaches a crucial juncture in his rule, that preoccupation with the past is now central to his political agenda. A high-level <a href="#">meeting</a> opening in Beijing on Monday will issue a "resolution" officially reassessing the party's 100-year history that is likely to cement his status as an epoch-making leader alongside Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.</p> <p>While ostensibly about historical issues, the Central Committee's resolution — practically holy writ for officials — will shape China's politics and society for decades to come.</p>

The touchstone document on the party's past, only the third of its kind, is sure to become the focus of an intense indoctrination campaign. It will dictate how the authorities teach China's modern history in textbooks, films, television shows and classrooms. It will embolden censors and police officers [applying sharpened laws](#) against any who mock, or even question, the communist cause and its "martyrs." Even in China, where the party's power is all but absolute, it will remind officials and citizens that Mr. Xi is defining their times, and demanding their loyalty.

"This is about creating a new timescape for China around the Communist Party and Xi in which he is riding the wave of the past towards the future," said [Geremie R. Barmé](#), a historian of China based in New Zealand. "It is not really a resolution about past history, but a resolution about future leadership."

By exalting [Mr. Xi](#), the decision will fortify his authority before a party congress late next year, at which he is very likely to win another five-year term as leader. The orchestrated acclaim around the history document, which could be published days after the Central Committee meeting ends on Thursday, will help deter any questioning of Mr. Xi's record.

Mr. Xi, 68, is China's most powerful leader in decades, and he has won widespread public support for attacking corruption, reducing poverty and projecting Chinese strength to the world. Still, party insiders seeking to blunt Mr. Xi's dominance before the congress could take aim at the early mishandling of the Covid pandemic or damaging tensions with the United States.

Especially after the resolution, such criticisms may amount to heresy. In the buildup to this week's meeting, articles in People's Daily, the party's main newspaper, [have praised Mr. Xi](#) as the "core" leader defeating the pandemic and other crises. Commentaries have exalted him as the unyielding leader needed for such perilous times, when China's ascent could be threatened by domestic economic risks or hostility from the United States and other Western powers.

"Xi Jinping is undoubtedly the core figure mastering the tide of history," read an [article from Xinhua](#), the official news agency, about the forthcoming resolution.

The resolution is likely to offer a sweeping account of modern China that will help to justify Mr. Xi's policies by giving them the gravitas of historical destiny.

Mao led the country to stand up against oppression, Deng brought prosperity, and now Mr. Xi is propelling the nation into a new era of national strength, says the stage-by-stage description of modern China's rise that is laid out in party documents and is likely to be enshrined in the resolution.

In the coming years, Mr. Xi's priorities are focused on reducing wealth inequalities through a program of ["common prosperity"](#), lessening China's reliance on imported technology, and continuing to modernize its military to prepare for potential conflict.

Mr. Xi's conception of history offers "an ideological framework which justifies greater and greater levels of party intervention in politics, the economy and foreign policy," said Kevin Rudd, a former Australian prime minister who speaks Chinese and has had long meetings with Mr. Xi.

For Mr. Xi, defending the Chinese Communist Party's revolutionary heritage also appears to be a personal quest. He has repeatedly voiced fears that as China becomes increasingly distant from its revolutionary roots, officials and citizens are at growing risk of losing faith in the party.

"To destroy a country, you must first eradicate its history," [Mr. Xi has said](#), quoting a Confucian scholar from the 19th century.

Mr. Xi's father, Xi Zhongxun, served as a senior official under Mao and Deng, and the [family suffered years of persecution](#) after Mao turned against the elder Mr. Xi. Instead of becoming disillusioned with the

revolution like quite a few contemporaries, the younger Mr. Xi remained loyal to the party and has argued that defending its “red” heritage is essential for its survival.

“He has this visceral notion that as the son of a revolutionary, Xi Zhongxun, that he cannot allow the revolution simply to drift away,” said Mr. Rudd, now president of the [Asia Society](#).

Mr. Xi has also often [cited the Soviet Union](#) as a warning for China, arguing that it collapsed in part because its leaders failed to eradicate “historical nihilism” — critical accounts of purges, political persecution and missteps that corroded faith in the communist cause.

The new resolution will reflect that defensive pride in the party. While the titles of the two previous history resolutions said they were about “problems” or “issues,” Mr. Xi’s will be about the party’s “major achievements and historical experiences,” according to a preparatory meeting [last month](#).

The resolution will present the party’s 100-year history as a story of heroic sacrifice and success, a drumroll of preliminary articles in party media indicates. Traumatic times like famine and purges will fall further into a soft-focus background — acknowledged but not elaborated.

Mr. Xi “sees history as a tool to use against the biggest threats to Chinese Communist Party rule,” said [Joseph Torigian](#), an assistant professor at American University who has studied Mr. Xi and his father. “He’s also someone who sees that competing narratives of history are dangerous.”

Plenty of Chinese people embrace the party’s proud version of its past and credit it with improving their lives. In 2019, there were [1.4 billion visits](#) to revolutionary “red” tour museums and memorials, and Mr. Xi [makes a point](#) of going to such places during his travels. A village where Mr. Xi labored for seven years has become a site for [organized political pilgrimages](#).

“Instruction in revolutionary traditions must start with toddlers,” Mr. Xi said in 2016, according to a [recently released compendium](#) of his comments on the theme. “Infuse red genes into the bloodstream and immerse our hearts in them.”

In creating a history resolution, Mr. Xi is emulating his two most powerful and officially revered predecessors. Mao oversaw a resolution in 1945 that stamped his authority on the party. Deng oversaw [one in 1981](#) that acknowledged the destruction of Mao’s later decades while defending his revered status as the founder of the People’s Republic. And both resolutions put a cap on political strife and uncertainty.

“They were creating a common framework, a common vision, of past and future among the party elite,” said Daniel Leese, a historian at the University of Freiburg in Germany who studies modern China. “If you don’t unify the thinking of people in the circles of power about the past, it’s very difficult to be on the same page about the future.”

Throughout this year, Chinese officials have already been undergoing an indoctrination program in Mr. Xi’s views about history. And the main texts in the campaign appear to be a preview of the forthcoming decision, especially the new [531-page “brief” history](#) of the party.

That history celebrates at length Mr. Xi’s successes in reducing corruption, cutting poverty and advancing China’s technological capabilities. His response to the Covid pandemic, which began in China in late 2019, showed “acute insight and resolute decision-making,” it says.

The new resolution is likely to praise both Mao and Deng while indicating that only Mr. Xi has the answers for China’s new era of rising power, said [Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik](#), a retired professor at the University of Vienna who studies the party’s use of history.

“He is like a sponge that can take all the positive things from the past — what he thinks is positive about Mao and Deng — and he can bring them all together,” she said of the party’s depiction of Mr. Xi. In that telling, she said, “he is China’s own end of history. He has reached a level that cannot be surpassed.”

HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Koreans of Sakhalin: an anguished history</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/europe/korea-sakhalin-japan-russia.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/europe/korea-sakhalin-japan-russia.html</a>
GIST	<p>SAKHALIN ISLAND, Russia — On remote Sakhalin Island, near Russia’s eastern edge, tales of longing and splintered identity are embedded in people’s very names.</p> <p>Some people here have three different names — Russian, Korean and Japanese — each representing a different chapter of the island’s century-long history of forced resettlement and war.</p> <p>Taeko Nisio got her name from the Japanese authorities in 1939 after she arrived on Sakhalin, at 8 years old, when it was a part of Japan’s empire. The Soviets captured the island at the end of World War II, and her new Russian friends started calling her Tanya. But in the beginning, Ms. Nisio’s name was Jeon Chae-ryeon, and after eight decades, she is finally making plans to return to where she was born — South Korea.</p> <p>“Mom,” Ms. Nisio’s daughter Kim Geum-hee recalls exclaiming when the South Korean Consulate phoned at their concrete apartment block this fall. “We’re going home!”</p> <p>The Koreans of Sakhalin Island, a people stranded by history, are on the move yet again. A South Korean law took effect this year allowing more of Sakhalin’s Korean diaspora to return to their ancestral homeland, a moment of long-delayed redemption for a people brought here as laborers three generations ago and then left stateless under Soviet rule.</p> <p>But the story of the Sakhalin Koreans, now numbering about 25,000 on this 600-mile-long Pacific island, is also a very Russian story of emigration and the long shadow of war. Though Seoul this year broadened the scope of those Sakhalin Koreans being given government support to return, most still do not qualify — forcing the thousands who do to make often wrenching decisions about staying or going, and potentially leaving family behind.</p> <p>“There will be more broken families,” said Pak Sun Ok, director of an advocacy group for Sakhalin Koreans in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the island’s main city. “This wound is being opened up again.”</p> <p>So many people have been coming in to ask about the possibility of leaving that a printed-out sign hangs downstairs at the Korean Cultural Center: “Check with the consulate for information about moving to Korea.” Upstairs, Ms. Pak pursed her lips and frowned as she scrolled through a document just posted by the South Korean Consulate showing that 350 people had already been approved to depart as early as this month. In the hallway, black-and-white photographs evoked decades of dislocation.</p> <p>In one, a grimacing old man with a bulging backpack looks back, brow furrowed and mouth open, holding his hat to wave farewell, as he walks alone across the tarmac toward a waiting plane.</p> <p>For about 40 years before and during World War II, Japan controlled the southern half of Sakhalin and brought over thousands of laborers from Korea. The Soviets captured the island in August 1945 and allowed the Japanese to return to Japan. Many Koreans were left behind and became stateless residents of the Soviet Union.</p> <p>Some later moved to Communist North Korea. But most hailed from the South, and for decades they were cut off from home and from family by an Asian Iron Curtain.</p> <p>As the Soviet Union fell and Seoul and Moscow established ties, South Korea allowed those Sakhalin Koreans who had been born while the island was still under Japanese control to move back. It was an echo of Israel’s welcome of Soviet Jews and Germany’s repatriation program for the ethnic Germans of the former Soviet Union.</p> <p>But unlike those initiatives, South Korea’s did not apply to multiple generations. In the 1990s and 2000s, more than 4,000 first-generation Sakhalin Koreans moved to South Korea, often leaving the family they</p>

had formed in Russia behind. Ms. Pak says she wails at the airport the day she went to say goodbye to her stepsister recalled many “funerals of the living” happening at once.

“They wanted to go to their homeland to die,” Viktoriya Bya, editor of Sakhalin’s Korean-language newspaper, said of that first wave of repatriation.

Many of those who stayed became successful in capitalist Russia, profiting from Sakhalin Island’s energy boom, trade with South Korea and Japan and lucrative business ties with North Korea. One businessman, Li Ku Yul, showed off silver and gold medals in his Sakhalin office awarded by the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly of North Korea. He had one main piece of advice for fellow Russians traveling to Pyongyang: “Never criticize” your hosts.

These days, Korean culture suffuses Sakhalin, a region of about 500,000. You can find Korean restaurants across the island, and kimchi at roadside shops. The Presbyterian Church is run by a South Korean pastor and feels like the only place in Russia — a nation of Covid skeptics — where everyone wears masks indoors. The public arts school has a Korean department where some of the performances are based on North Korean songbooks, but with altered lyrics.

“Sometimes there’s just a really beautiful melody, and we don’t tell the kids that it’s about the Great Leader,” said Yulia Sin, who runs the Korean department. “We can choose what we take from North Korea and what we take from South Korea, and create something new.”

But now the drama of families separated by emigration and repatriation has returned, magnified by coronavirus border closures. The new law allows younger Sakhalin Koreans to move to South Korea if they are caring for a first-generation returnee. But restrictions remain: only one person, along with their spouse, can qualify as someone’s “caretaker,” forcing siblings to negotiate who among them will move, and barring their grown children from coming along.

“Many people are really arguing, quarreling because of this,” said Sergei Li, 33, a bank employee who volunteers distributing Korean groceries to older members of the diaspora, paid for in part by a South Korean foundation.

While South Korea has a visa-free policy for Russians and direct flights to Sakhalin, the separation has come to feel far more substantial during the pandemic. Russia’s borders reopened to South Koreans only in August, and South Korea still requires a 10-day quarantine for most arrivals.

Mr. Li’s parents-in-law are planning to move to South Korea under the new law, leaving grandchildren behind. He said he had no plans to depart, describing himself as a proud Russian with a Russian mentality — which he defined as, for example, having the courage to speak up when one disagreed with one’s elders.

Ms. Pak, the advocacy group’s director, says she is staying put for now, contrary to rumors that she is planning to leave. Ms. Bya, the newspaper editor, is resisting her parents’ entreaties that she come join them in South Korea because she values her current job. Liede San Bok, a human-resources specialist, says that she would like to move in the future, but her older sister has already applied as their mother’s caretaker.

Sakhalin Koreans have campaigned for years for the entire diaspora to have the right to claim South Korean citizenship. While people of Korean descent live all across the former Soviet Union, Sakhalin Koreans consider themselves a separate group, with a particular legacy of forced resettlement. But South Korean lawmakers hesitated bestowing special rights upon Sakhalin Koreans, and even when the breakthrough came last year — thanks to influential lawmakers from the majority party sponsoring new legislation — they still imposed strict limits.

Ms. Nisio, 89, said that her mother had brought her from southwestern Korea to Karafuto Prefecture, as southern Sakhalin was once known, where Ms. Nisio’s uncle worked in a coal mine. She had wanted to

	<p>move back to South Korea two decades ago, but did not because it would have meant leaving behind her daughter Ms. Kim, who was ill at the time.</p> <p>Under the new law, the two of them can now depart Russia together to become permanent residents of South Korea. The government will provide an apartment and, Ms. Kim expects, a television — a key amenity for Ms. Nisio, a fan of South Korean dramas.</p> <p>Ms. Kim figures they will be able to take two 50-pound suitcases with them, which should be plenty.</p> <p>“I’m very happy,” Ms. Nisio said recently in broken Russian, as she was preparing to bid farewell to Sakhalin. “Because the homeland, the homeland is over there!”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Nicaragua descends into autocratic rule</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/americas/nicaragua-election-ortega.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/americas/nicaragua-election-ortega.html</a>
GIST	<p>MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Daniel Ortega became a hero in Nicaragua for helping overthrow a notorious dictator. Now, 40 years later, he has become the kind of authoritarian leader he once fought against.</p> <p>After methodically choking off competition and dissent, Mr. Ortega has all but ensured his victory in presidential elections on Sunday, representing a turn toward an openly dictatorial model that could set an example for other leaders across Latin America.</p> <p>He detained the credible challengers who planned to run against him, shut down opposition parties, banned large campaign events and closed voting stations en masse. He even jailed some of the elderly Sandinistas who fought with him to depose the dictator, Anastasio Somoza.</p> <p>“This isn’t an election, this is a farce,” said Berta Valle, the wife of one of the jailed opposition leaders. “No one will elect anyone, because the only candidate is Daniel Ortega.”</p> <p>Mr. Ortega’s path to a fourth consecutive term in office and near-total control of Nicaragua has ushered in a new era of repression and terror, analysts said. His claim to victory would deliver another blow to President Biden’s agenda in the region, where his administration has failed to slow an anti-democratic slide and a mass exodus of desperate people toward the United States. Even before the results were announced Sunday, the White House released a statement denouncing “a pantomime election that was neither free nor fair, and most certainly not democratic.”</p> <p>A record number of Nicaraguans have been intercepted crossing the Southwest border of the United States this year since Mr. Ortega began crushing his opposition. And more than 80,000 Nicaraguans are living as refugees in neighboring Costa Rica.</p> <p>“This is a turning point toward authoritarianism in the region,” said José Miguel Vivanco, head of the Americas region for Human Rights Watch, who called Mr. Ortega’s crackdown “a slow-motion horror movie.”</p> <p>“He is not even trying to preserve some sort of facade of democratic rule,” Mr. Vivanco said of the Nicaraguan leader. “He is in a flagrant, open manner, just deciding to treat the election as a performance.”</p> <p>The commission that monitors elections has been entrusted to Ortega loyalists, and there have been no public debates among the contest’s five remaining candidates, all of whom are little-known members of parties aligned with his Sandinista government.</p> <p>Once polls opened early on Sunday morning, some polling stations had lines as Nicaraguans turned out to cast their ballots. But as the day progressed, many of the stations were largely empty. The streets of the capital, Managua, were also quiet, with little to show that a significant election was underway.</p>



The night before, at least four people from opposition organizations were arrested and their houses raided by the police.

“These elections are, thank God, a sign, a commitment by the vast majority of Nicaraguans to vote for peace,” Mr. Ortega said in a national television broadcast on Sunday. “We are burying war and giving life to peace.”

Mr. Ortega first came to power after helping lead the revolution that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. More than a decade later, he was ousted by Nicaraguan voters, in what was considered the nation’s first democratic election.

That lesson about the risks of democratic rule appears to have shaped the rest of Mr. Ortega’s political life. He took office again in 2007, after getting a rival party to agree to a legal change that allowed a candidate to win an election with just 35 percent of the vote. He then spent years undermining the institutions holding together the country’s fragile democracy.

He made it clear that he would not tolerate dissent in 2018, when he sent the police to violently smother protests against the government, leading to hundreds of deaths and accusations by human rights groups of crimes against humanity.

But the sudden sweep of arrests preceding the elections, which sent seven political candidates and more than 150 others to jail, transformed the country into what many activists described as a police state, where even mild expressions of dissent are muted by fear.

A sportswriter was recently imprisoned for a series of posts critical of the government on Twitter and Facebook, under a new law that mandates up to five years in jail for anyone who says anything that “endangers economic stability” or “public order.”

After the detentions began, the United States placed new sanctions on Nicaraguan officials and the Organization of American States condemned the government. This month, Congress passed legislation demanding more punitive measures on Nicaragua. But that pressure has not stopped Mr. Ortega from systematically eliminating any obstacle to his victory on Sunday.

A recent poll showed that 78 percent of Nicaraguans see the possible re-election of Mr. Ortega as illegitimate and that just 9 percent support the governing party. Yet many refuse to question the government in public, afraid that they will be arrested or harassed by Sandinista party representatives who are stationed in every neighborhood to monitor political activities.

The leader of one electoral watchdog group, Olga Valle, left the country after Mr. Ortega’s government began targeting anyone who spoke out against it.

“There was a lot of fear of showing your face,” said Ms. Valle. “There is a total restriction of freedoms, people have absolutely no ability to meet, to organize.”

The first aspiring presidential candidate to be targeted was Cristiana Chamorro, Nicaragua’s most prominent opposition leader and the daughter of the woman who unseated Mr. Ortega in 1990 after his first stint in power.

Police officers put Ms. Chamorro under house arrest on a Wednesday in June — the day after Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken delivered remarks on the importance of strengthening democracy next door in Costa Rica.

Félix Maradiaga, who also planned to run against Mr. Ortega, was tossed in jail days later and kept there for months before his sister was allowed a 20-minute visit.

His wife, Berta Valle, who has been in exile in the United States since facing threats after the 2018 protests, said that he had lost 45 pounds and that for months his only bathroom was a hole in his cell. He told family members that he is forced to remain in complete silence, except when he is subjected to daily interrogations. “It’s psychological torture,” she said.

Mr. Maradiaga has been allowed one meeting with his lawyer, surrounded by heavily armed guards, his wife added. That lawyer has since fled the country.

By August, the only opposition party left standing was Citizens for Liberty, a movement on the right that some speculated would be allowed to run to give at least the impression of a fair fight. But then the electoral commission held a news conference announcing that the party had been shut down.

“I didn’t even finish watching it,” said Kitty Monterrey, the party’s president. “I grabbed my passports and I ran. I didn’t look back.”

She slipped out in the late afternoon, avoiding the police who had been stationed out front. To reach Costa Rica, Ms. Monterrey trudged through rivers on foot and horseback for 14 hours. She turned 71 the day of her journey.

“This is not an election process at all,” Ms. Monterrey said. “Elections are when you have the right to choose, but everyone is either in exile or in prison.”

There are no election observers in Nicaragua, only so-called “election companions,” a hodgepodge of officials brought in from countries like Spain, Argentina and Chile, many of whom are members of their local Communist parties. Their job, one member of the electoral commission recently said, is not to “intervene” but rather to “watch” and “enjoy” the voting process.

Across Nicaragua, there are few signs that a contest for the nation’s highest office is underway.

Gigantic images of Mr. Ortega and his wife, who is his vice president, loom over the streets. Vaccination sites play revolutionary jingles with titles like “The Commander Stays.” Government buildings fly the flag of the Sandinista party next to the national flag.

But aside from a smattering of fliers with opposition party logos in Managua, the capital, there are no billboards or campaign posters featuring anyone else.

“Ortega’s mask is off,” said Ms. Valle, the wife of the imprisoned opposition leader. “He can’t hide anymore.”

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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Britain health secretary: get booster shots</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/europe/uk-virus-surge-booster-shots.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/europe/uk-virus-surge-booster-shots.html</a>
GIST	<p>Britain’s health secretary is urging eligible residents to get booster shots of the coronavirus vaccine, aiming to reduce pressure on the country’s health system as winter approaches.</p> <p>Ten million Britons, largely those over age 50, have received booster shots since the government began offering them, and millions more will be invited in the coming weeks to book appointments.</p> <p>Officials hope the extra doses will boost protection against the virus. Some research suggests that immunity against infection in certain populations, particularly the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, may begin to wane six months after full vaccination.</p> <p>“If we all come together and play our part, we can get through this challenging winter, avoid a return to restrictions and enjoy Christmas,” said Sajid Javid, the health secretary, in a <a href="#">statement on Sunday</a>.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>The move recalled <a href="#">last winter's outbreak</a>, when the Alpha variant ripped through the country, prompting dozens of nations to ban British travelers and forcing families to cancel Christmas gatherings because of lockdown restrictions.</p> <p>As Britain and several European countries struggle with a surge in cases, <a href="#">the World Health Organization said this week</a> that Europe has reemerged as an epicenter of the pandemic and could experience a half million Covid-related deaths in the next three months.</p> <p>The region was reporting an average of more than 30 new cases a day for every 100,000 people, a rate that has almost doubled since mid-September. Officials have blamed the relaxation of coronavirus restrictions and low vaccination rates in some countries.</p> <p>Germany, where vaccination rates are lagging behind those in such European countries as Spain and Italy, <a href="#">reported a new daily case record</a> this week, with about 25,320 infections on average per day. Some 67 percent of the population is fully vaccinated.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/07 Los Angeles strict vaccine mandate</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/7/proof-of-vax-required-as-strict-mandate-takes-effect/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/7/proof-of-vax-required-as-strict-mandate-takes-effect/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>LOS ANGELES (AP) — Yoga studio owner David Gross felt relieved after Los Angeles passed a vaccine mandate that is among the strictest in the country, a measure taking effect Monday that requires proof of shots for everyone entering a wide variety of businesses from restaurants to shopping malls and theaters to nail and hair salons.</p> <p>For Gross, the relief came from knowing he and his co-owner don't have to unilaterally decide whether to verify their customers are vaccinated. In another part of town, the manager of a struggling nail salon feels trepidation and expects to lose customers. "This is going to be hard for us," Lucila Vazquez said.</p> <p>Los Angeles is among a growing number of cities across the U.S., including San Francisco and New York City, requiring people show proof of vaccination to enter various types of businesses and venues. But rules in the nation's second-most-populous city, called SafePassLA, apply to more types of businesses and other indoor locations including museums and convention centers.</p> <p>They are being implemented as new cases have started inching up following a sharp decline from an August peak driven by the delta variant.</p> <p>This was the time of year in 2020 when the worst spike of the pandemic was just beginning in California, which by January saw an average of 500 people die every day. Los Angeles became the state's epicenter and its hospitals were so overloaded with patients that ambulances idled outside with people struggling to breathe, waiting for beds to open.</p> <p>So many people died that morgues reached capacity and refrigerated trucks were brought in to handle the overflow. That stark scene played out as coronavirus vaccines arrived and California and Los Angeles moved aggressively to inoculate people.</p> <p>Among LA county's roughly 10 million people, 80% of eligible residents now have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and 71% of those eligible are fully vaccinated, according to public health officials.</p> <p>To guard against anything resembling the January carnage, the LA City Council voted 11-2 last month for the ordinance that requires people 12 and older to be fully vaccinated to enter indoor public spaces including sports arenas, museums, spas, indoor city facilities and other locations.</p>

Negative coronavirus tests within 72 hours of entry to those establishments would be required for people with religious or medical exemptions for vaccinations. Customers without proof can still use outdoor facilities and can briefly enter a business to use a restroom or pick up a food order.

While the order takes effect Monday, city officials say they won't start enforcing it until Nov. 29 to give businesses time to adjust. A first offense will bring a warning but subsequent ones could produce fines running from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who tested positive for the coronavirus last week while attending the United Nations climate change conference in Scotland, said the mandate will encourage more people to get shots and make businesses safer for employees and customers.

"Vaccinating more Angelenos is our only way out of this pandemic, and we must do everything in our power to keep pushing those numbers up," Garcetti said.

Business trade groups say the mandate will sow confusion because Los Angeles County's own vaccine rules - which apply to dozens of surrounding communities - are less sweeping. Cities are allowed to pass rules more stringent than the counties.

"There's a tremendous lack of clarity," said Sarah Wiltfong, senior policy manager at the Los Angeles County Business Federation. For example, most retail shops are exempt. "But shopping malls and shopping centers are included, which of course includes retail shops," she said.

Harassment of workers who are tasked with verifying vaccination is the top concern of the business federation's members, Wiltfong said.

"This puts employees in a potential position of conflict, when they're not necessarily trained to handle situations like that," she said.

Salons were especially hard hit during the pandemic and were among the last businesses to reopen indoors. Before COVID, Lynda Nail Salon in the Los Feliz neighborhood was regularly filled with clients for hair and nail appointments. On Wednesday morning, only one woman waited for her hair to set.

Vazquez, who manages the business, said she will follow the new rules even though many of her hair clients have said they won't come in if it requires being vaccinated.

Gyms and yoga studios like the one co-owned by Gross also fall under the order. He doesn't relish having his employees play the role of enforcer, checking every customer's vaccination status. But now that the rule is on the books, it's one less decision he and his partner Lydia Stone have to make as they navigate Highland Park Yoga back to in-person classes.

In anticipation of the new rules, the studio last month started encouraging its regular customers to submit their vaccine cards online so they don't have to show them at the start of every class. Gross and Stone said it would be heartbreaking to turn away anyone.

"You know, the City Council decided, the mayor signed it, and we have no choice but to comply with the law," Gross said, adding that the possibility of being punished for violating the law "would be hugely detrimental" to a yoga business that is barely surviving after being shut down for the bulk of the pandemic.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Analysis: 10,000 caught Covid in hospital</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/07/health/covid-19-hospital-died-khn-partner/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/07/health/covid-19-hospital-died-khn-partner/index.html</a>
GIST	(KHN)They went into hospitals with heart attacks, kidney failure or in a psychiatric crisis.  They left with covid-19 — if they left at all.

More than 10,000 patients were diagnosed with covid in a U.S. hospital last year after they were admitted for something else, according to federal and state records analyzed exclusively for KHN. The number is certainly an undercount, since it includes mostly patients 65 and older, plus California and Florida patients of all ages.

Yet in the scheme of things that can go wrong in a hospital, it is catastrophic: About 21% of the patients who contracted covid in the hospital from April to September last year died, the data shows. In contrast, nearly 8% of other Medicare patients died in the hospital at the time.

Steven Johnson, 66, was expecting to get an infection cut out of his hip flesh and bone at Blake Medical Center in Bradenton, Florida, last November. The retired pharmacist had survived colon cancer and was meticulous to avoid contracting covid. He could not have known that, from April through September, 8% of that hospital's Medicare covid patients were diagnosed with the virus after they were admitted for another concern.

Johnson had tested negative for covid two days before he was admitted. After 13 days in the hospital, he tested positive, said his wife, Cindy Johnson, also a retired pharmacist.

Soon he was struggling to clear a glue-like phlegm from his lungs. A medical team could hardly control his pain. They prompted Cindy to share his final wishes. She asked: "Honey, do you want to be intubated?" He responded with an emphatic "no." He died three days later.

After her husband tested positive, Cindy Johnson, trained in contact tracing, quickly got a covid test. She tested negative. Then she thought about the large number of hospital staffers flowing into and out of his room — where he was often unmasked — and suspected a staff member had infected him. That the hospital, part of the HCA Healthcare chain, still has not mandated staff vaccinations is "appalling," she said.

"I'm furious," she said.

"How can they say on their website," she asked, "that the safety precautions 'we've put into place make our facilities among the safest possible places to receive healthcare at this time'?"

Blake Medical Center spokesperson Lisa Kirkland said the hospital is "strongly encouraging vaccination" and noted that it follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and federal and state guidelines to protect patients. President Joe Biden has called for all hospital employees to be vaccinated, but the requirement could face resistance in [a dozen states](#), including Florida, that have banned vaccine mandates.

Overall, the rate of in-hospital spread among Medicare and other patients was lower than in other countries, including the United Kingdom, which makes such [data public](#) and openly discusses it. On average, about 1.7% of U.S. hospitalized covid patients were diagnosed with the virus in U.S. hospitals, according to an analysis of Medicare records from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2020, provided by Dr. James Kennedy, founder of CDIMD, a Nashville-based consulting and data analytics company.

Yet the rate of infection was far higher in 38 hospitals where 5% or more of the Medicare covid cases were documented as hospital-acquired. The data is from a challenging stretch last year when protective gear was in short supply and tests were scarce or slow to produce results. The Medicare data for the fourth quarter of 2020 and this year isn't available yet, and the state data reflects April 1 through Dec. 31, 2020.

A KHN review of work-safety records, medical literature and interviews with staff at high-spread hospitals points to why the virus took hold: Hospital leaders were slow to appreciate its airborne nature, which made coughing patients hazardous to roommates and staff members, who often wore less-protective surgical masks instead of N95s. Hospitals failed to test every admitted patient, enabled by CDC guidance that leaves such testing to the "discretion of [the facility](#)." Management often [failed to inform](#) workers when they'd been exposed to covid and so were at risk of spreading it themselves.

Spread among patients and staffers seemed to go hand in hand. At Beaumont Hospital, Taylor, in Michigan, 139 employee covid infections were logged between April 6 to Oct. 20 last year, a hospital [inspection report](#) shows. Nearly 7% of the Medicare patients with covid tested positive after they were admitted to that hospital for something else, the federal data shows. A hospital spokesperson said tests were not available to screen all patients last year, resulting in some late diagnoses. He said all incoming patients are tested now.

Tracking covid inside health facilities is no new task to federal officials, who publicly report new staff and resident [cases weekly](#) for each U.S. nursing home. Yet the Department of Health and Human Services [reports data](#) on covid's spread in hospitals only on a statewide basis, so patients are in the dark about which facilities have cases.

KHN commissioned analyses of hospital billing records, which are also used more broadly to spot various [hospital-acquired](#) infections. For covid, the data has limitations. It can pick up some community-acquired cases that were slow to show up, as it can take two to 14 days from exposure to the virus for symptoms to appear, with the average being [four to five days](#). The records do not account for cases picked up in an emergency room or diagnosed after a hospital patient was discharged.

Linda Moore, 71, tested positive at least 15 days into a hospital stay for spinal surgery, according to her daughter Trisha Tavalazzi. Her mother was at Havasu Regional Medical Center in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, which did not have a higher-than-average rate of internal spread last summer.

The hospital implemented "rigorous health and safety protocols to protect all of our patients" during the pandemic, said hospital spokesperson Corey Santoriello, who would not comment on Moore's case, citing privacy laws.

Moore was airlifted to another hospital, where her condition only declined further, her daughter said. After the ventilator was removed, she clung to life fitfully for 5½ hours, as her daughter prayed for her mother to find her way to heaven.

"I asked her mom and her dad and her family and prayed to God, 'Please just come show her the way,'" Tavalazzi said. "I relive it every day."

When Tavalazzi sought answers from the hospital about where her mom got the virus, she said, she got none: "No one ever called me back."

### **Two Negative Covid Tests, Then 'Patient Zero'**

As the second surge of covid subsided last September, doctors from the prestigious Brigham and Women's Hospital published a reassuring [study](#): With careful infection control, only two of 697 covid patients acquired the virus within the Boston hospital. That is about 0.3% of patients — about six times lower than the overall Medicare rate. Brigham tested every patient it admitted, exceeding CDC recommendations. It was transparent and open about safety concerns.

But the study, published in the high-profile JAMA Network Open journal, conveyed the wrong message, according to Dr. Manoj Jain, an infectious-disease physician and adjunct professor at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. Covid was spreading in hospitals, he said, and the study buried "the problem under the rug."

Before the virtual ink on the study was dry, the virus began a stealthy streak through the elite hospital. It slipped in with a patient who tested negative twice — but turned out to be positive. She was "patient zero" in an outbreak affecting 38 staffers and 14 patients, according [to a study](#) in Annals of Internal Medicine initially published Feb. 9.

That [study's](#) authors sequenced the genome of the virus to confirm which cases were related — and precisely how it traveled through the hospital.



As patients were moved from room to room in the early days of the outbreak, covid spread among roommates 8 out of 9 times, likely through aerosol transmission, the study says. A survey of staff members revealed that those caring for coughing patients were more likely to get sick.

The virus also appeared to have breached the CDC-OK'd protective gear. Two staff members who had close patient contact while wearing a surgical mask and face shield still wound up infected. The findings suggested that more-protective N95 respirators could help safeguard staff.

Brigham and Women's now tests every patient upon admission and again soon after. Nurses are encouraged to test again if they see a subtle sign of covid, said Dr. Erica Shenoy, associate chief of the Infection Control Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital, who helped craft policy at Brigham.

She said nurses and environmental services workers are at the table for policymaking: "I personally make it a point to say, 'Tell me what you're thinking,'" Shenoy said. "'There's no retribution because we need to know.'"

CDC guidelines, though, left wide latitude on protective gear and testing. To this day, Shenoy said, hospitals employ a wide range of policies.

The CDC said in a statement that its guidelines "provide a comprehensive and layered approach to preventing transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in healthcare settings," and include testing patients with "even mild symptoms" or recent exposure to someone with covid.

Infection control policies are rarely apparent to patients or visitors, beyond whether they're asked to wear a mask. But reviews of public records and interviews with more than a dozen people show that at hospitals with high rates of covid spread, staff members were often alarmed by the lack of safety practices.

### **Nurses Sound the Alarm on Covid Spread**

As covid crept into Florida in spring 2020, nurse Victoria Holland clashed with managers at Blake Medical Center in Bradenton, where Steven Johnson died.

She said managers suspended her early in the pandemic after taking part in a protest and "having a hissy fit" when she was denied a new N95 respirator before an "aerosol-generating" procedure. The CDC warns that such procedures can spread the virus through the air. Before the pandemic, nurses were trained to dispose of an N95 after each patient encounter.

When the suspension was over, Holland said, she felt unsafe. "They told us nothing," she said. "It was all a little whisper between the doctors. You had potential covids and you'd get a little surgical mask because [they didn't] want to waste" an N95 unless they knew the patient was positive.

Holland said she quit in mid-April. Her nursing colleagues lodged a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in late June alleging that staff "working around possible Covid-19 positive cases" had been denied PPE. Staff members protested outside the hospital [in July](#) and filed another OSHA complaint that said the hospital was allowing covid-exposed employees to keep working.

Kirkland, the Blake spokesperson, said the hospital responded to OSHA and "no deficiencies were identified."

The Medicare analysis shows that 22 of 273 patients with covid, or 8%, were diagnosed with the virus after they were admitted to Blake. That's about five times as high as the national average.

Kirkland said "there is no standard way for measuring COVID-19 hospital-associated transmissions" and "there is no evidence to suggest the risk of transmission at Blake Medical Center is different than what you would find at other hospitals."



In Washington, D.C., 34 Medicare covid patients contracted the virus at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, or nearly 6% of its total, the analysis shows.

Unhappy with the safety practices — which included gas sterilization and reuse of N95s — National Nurses United members [protested](#) on the hospital lawn in July 2020. At the protest, nurse Zoe Bendixen said one nurse had died of the virus and 50 had gotten sick: "[Nurses] can become a source for spreading the disease to other patients, co-workers and family members."

Nurse Yuhana Gidey said she caught covid after treating a patient who turned out to be infected. Another nurse — not managers doing contact tracing — told her she'd been exposed, she said.

Nurse Kimberly Walsh said in an interview there was an outbreak in a geriatric unit where she worked in September 2020. She said management blamed nurses for bringing the virus into the unit. But Walsh pointed to another problem: The hospital wasn't covid-testing patients coming in from nursing homes, where spread was rampant last year.

MedStar declined a request for an interview about its infection control practices and did not respond to specific questions.

While hospitals must track and [publicly report](#) rates of persistent infections like C. diff, antibiotic-resistant staph and surgical site infections, similar hospital-acquired covid rates are not reported.

KHN examined a different source of data that Congress required [hospitals to document](#) about "hospital-acquired conditions." The Medicare data, which notes whether each covid case was "present on admission" or not, becomes available months after a hospitalization in obscure files that require a data-use agreement typically granted to researchers. KHN counted cases, as federal officials do, in some instances in which the documentation is deemed insufficient to categorize a case (see data methodology, in source link).

For this data, whether to deem a covid case hospital-acquired lies with medical coders who review doctors' notes and discharge summaries and ask doctors questions if the status is unclear, said Sue Bowman, senior director of coding policy and compliance at American Health Information Management Association.

She said medical coders are aware that the data is used for hospital quality measures and would be careful to review the contract tracing or other information in the medical record.

If a case was in the data KHN used, "that would mean it was acquired during the hospital stay either from a health care worker or another patient or maybe if a hospital allowed visitors, from a visitor," Bowman said. "That would be a fair interpretation of the data."

The high death rate for those diagnosed with covid during a hospital stay — about 21% — mirrors the death rate for other Medicare covid patients last year, when doctors had few proven methods to help patients. It also highlights the hazard unvaccinated staffers pose to patients, said Jain, the infectious-disease doctor. The American Hospital Association estimates that about 42% of U.S. hospitals have mandated that all staff members be vaccinated.

"We don't need [unvaccinated staff] to be a threat to patients," Jain said. "[Hospital] administration is too afraid to push the nursing staff, and the general public is clueless at what a threat a non-vaccinated person poses to a vulnerable population."

Cindy Johnson said the hospital where she believes her husband contracted covid faced minimal scrutiny in a state [inspection](#), even after she said she reported that he caught covid there. She explored suing, but an attorney told her it would be nearly impossible to win such a case. A 2021 [state law](#) requires proof of "at least gross negligence" to prevail in court.

	Johnson did ask a doctor who sees patients at the hospital for this: Please take down the big "OPEN & SAFE" sign outside.
	Within days, the sign was gone.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Pilots protest federal vaccine mandate</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/north-carolina-airport-pilot-protest-biden-vaccine-mandate">https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/north-carolina-airport-pilot-protest-biden-vaccine-mandate</a>
GIST	<p>A major <a href="#">North Carolina</a> airport saw <a href="#">pilots</a> protesting Saturday against President Biden's new <a href="#">vaccine</a> mandate, as the airline industry already struggles with staffing shortages amid an inoculation push.</p> <p>A group called the US Freedom Flyers organized a rally outside Charlotte-Douglas International Airport Saturday, as pilots for major airlines and other supported protested against Biden's latest directive that all private companies with 100 employees or more to enforce a vaccine requirement starting Jan. 4, <a href="#">Fox 8</a> reported. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Louisiana on Saturday granted an emergency stay of the vaccine requirement by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.</p> <p>"We're out here today because we're tired of the mandate. We're tired of being told that our bodies are not ours," Artemis Coburn, a pilot for a major airline, told the station. "It just comes down to enough is enough, and we're going to make a stand, and this is our stand."</p> <p>Pilots who spoke with the outlet said they could not disclose which airline they worked for because doing so would breach their employment contracts. The temporary stay on Biden's order does not immediately take effect, and the next deadline for his federal mandate is Dec. 5, when businesses with over 100 employees must require unvaccinated employees to wear masks indoors.</p> <p>If the mandate does take effect, 84 million private sector workers could be required by their employers to get vaccinated for COVID-19 or submit to weekly testing.</p> <p>"If it actually comes down to that, it's going to be catastrophic for the airline industry," Joshua Yoder, co-founder of US Freedom Flyers, said. "They can't afford to lose 10% of their people, much less 20-30% across the various workgroups."</p> <p>Those percentages are based on the estimated number of employees in the airline industry who have resisted getting the vaccine based on medical or religious reasons or other reservations, Yoder said.</p> <p>"Our governments, our companies, our union, and even a lot of our fellow employees, are not defending freedom, so we have to fill in the void," Robert Soudher, another co-founder of US Freedom Flyers, said.</p> <p>This comes after American Airlines canceled nearly 2,000 flights over the Halloween holiday weekend, citing staffing shortages, as severe winds at the airline's main hub at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport prevented some employees from catching their next flights. That followed Columbus Day weekend earlier in October when Southwest Airlines also canceled hundreds of flights over what some speculated to be employees calling out sick in protest over vaccine mandates – something Southwest's pilots union adamantly denied, <a href="#">Texas Monthly</a> reported.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Concertgoers sue: Houston crowd surge</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/travis-scott-concert-astroworld-singer-drake-live-nation-scoremore-sued-over-deadly-crowd-surge-houston/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/travis-scott-concert-astroworld-singer-drake-live-nation-scoremore-sued-over-deadly-crowd-surge-houston/</a>
GIST	At least three lawsuits have been filed on behalf of people who say they were injured at the Houston music festival where <a href="#">at least eight people were killed</a> . The defendants include rappers Travis Scott and Drake and venue and entertainment company Live Nation. Two of the suits are seeking \$1 million in damages.

A crowd surge occurred during Scott's performance on Friday night, when concertgoers started to "compress" toward the stage, Houston Fire Chief Samuel Peña said early Saturday.

"That caused some panic, and it started causing some injuries," Peña said. At least [eight people](#), including two teenagers, were killed and dozens were hospitalized.

A civil suit by plaintiff Kristian Paredes against Scott and Drake blames them for negligently inciting "a riot and violence." The suit, one of those seeking \$1 million in damages, also claims Live Nation failed to provide adequate security and medical services at the Astroworld festival.

The suit alleges that Scott, who founded the festival in 2018, "had incited mayhem and chaos at prior events," and says the other defendants didn't take steps to prevent that behavior. It did not provide any examples of such conduct.

It also claims Drake, who appeared as a surprise performer, "helped incite the crowd even though he knew of [Scott's] prior conduct," and "continued to perform on stage while the crowd mayhem continued."

Scott and Drake declined to comment on the lawsuit.

In a statement Saturday, Scott said he was "absolutely devastated by what took place." Representatives for Live Nation did not immediately respond to CBS News' request for comment.

The lawsuit says Paredes was standing at the front of the general admission section at the time, near a metal barrier separating the VIP section from the rest of the crowd. When Scott began performing, Paredes "felt an immediate push" before "the crowd became chaotic and a stampede began," the lawsuit says.

As a result of the incident, Paredes "suffered severe bodily injuries" that "had a serious effect on the Plaintiff's health and well-being," the lawsuit says.

"Some of the effects are permanent and will abide with the Plaintiff for a long time into the future, if not for his entire life," the suit says.

In addition, civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump said Sunday that he's filed a lawsuit on behalf of 21-year-old Noah Gutierrez, and expects to file more for other alleged victims next week.

"We are hearing horrific accounts of the terror and helplessness people experienced — the horror of a crushing crowd and the awful trauma of watching people die while trying unsuccessfully to save them," Crump said in a statement. "We will be pursuing justice for all our clients who were harmed in this tragic and preventable event."

Scott, Live Nation and concert promoter Scoremore are defendants in a suit seeking \$1 million in damages for Manuel Souza. That suit claims Souza "suffered serious bodily injuries when the uncontrolled crowd at the concert knocked him to the ground and trampled him."

His injuries, the suit asserts, "were the inevitable and predictable result of (the) defendants' conscious disregard of the extreme risks of harm to concertgoers that had been escalating since hours earlier. ... Eventually, due to (the) defendants' active decision to let the show go on, the scene devolved into a complete melee, resulting in the needless, untimely death of at least 8 people and injuries to scores of others."

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HEADLINE	11/08 German Covid infection rate new high
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/german-covid-infection-rate-high-vaccinations-slow-81029857">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/german-covid-infection-rate-high-vaccinations-slow-81029857</a>

<p><b>GIST</b></p>	<p>BERLIN -- Germany's coronavirus infection rate climbed to its highest recorded level yet on Monday as what officials have called a “pandemic of the unvaccinated” gathers pace.</p> <p>The national disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said the country has seen 201.1 new cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days. That was above the previous record of 197.6 from Dec. 22 last year. While it's still a lower rate than in several other European countries, it has set alarm bells ringing.</p> <p>The seven-day infection rate has long ceased to be the only policy yardstick in Germany, with new hospital admissions now an important factor. Those are currently at just under 4 per 100,000 residents over a week — compared with a peak of about 15.5 last Christmas — but officials say hospitals are filling up in badly affected areas.</p> <p>The disease control center said Monday that 15,513 new COVID-19 cases were reported over the past 24 hours — down from a record 37,120 on Friday, but figures are typically lower after the weekend. Another 33 deaths were recorded, bringing Germany's total to 96,558.</p> <p>Germany has struggled to find ways to pep up its much-slowed vaccination campaign. At least 67% of the population of 83 million is fully vaccinated, according to official figures, which authorities say isn't enough. Unlike some other European countries, it has balked at making vaccinations mandatory for any professional group.</p> <p>As at many times during the pandemic, Germany has a patchwork of regional rules. Most places restrict access to many indoor facilities and events to people who have been vaccinated, have recovered or been tested — with the latter now being excluded in some areas. Those rules are often enforced laxly.</p> <p>Rules on whether schoolchildren must wear masks in class vary from state to state.</p> <p>Free rapid tests for all were scrapped nearly a month ago in an effort to incentivize more people to get vaccinated. There are now widespread calls for them to be reintroduced. And officials now advocate booster vaccinations for everyone who got their initial shots six months ago or more.</p> <p>Germany currently has a caretaker national government after its election in September. The parties that are expected to form the next government plan to bring legislation to parliament this week that would allow an “epidemic situation of national scope,” in place since March 2020, to expire at the end of the month but provide a new legal framework for coronavirus measures.</p> <p>There has been criticism of that decision. But Katrin Goering-Eckardt, the parliamentary leader of one of those parties, the Greens, told ARD television that “we need to create measures now that can't be questioned by courts.”</p> <p>She argued that, with two-thirds of residents vaccinated, the current rules weren't legally waterproof.</p> <p>Schools and other facilities can be closed if necessary, but “with so many people vaccinated, we won't be able legally to do a complete lockdown for those who are vaccinated,” Goering-Eckardt said.</p> <p><a href="#">Return to Top</a></p>
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<p><b>HEADLINE</b></p>	<p><b>11/07 China triggers Pentagon fears</b></p>
<p><b>SOURCE</b></p>	<p><a href="https://thehill.com/policy/defense/580248-china-triggers-growing-fears-for-us-military">https://thehill.com/policy/defense/580248-china-triggers-growing-fears-for-us-military</a></p>
<p><b>GIST</b></p>	<p>China’s military buildup and its push to develop nuclear-capable missiles is unnerving Congress and U.S. defense officials alike.</p> <p>America’s defense establishment has watched threats from Beijing rapidly grow in multiple areas, including recent hypersonic missile tests, an expanding nuclear arsenal, strides in space and cyber and seemingly daily threats to Taiwan.</p>

“We’re witnessing one of the largest shifts in global geo-strategic power the world has witnessed,” Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley said Wednesday when speaking about China’s recent military advances.

“They are clearly challenging us regionally and their aspiration is to challenge the United States globally.”

A potential shift in the global balance of power is worrisome to U.S. officials and lawmakers.

For decades, America has held the stance of the world's foremost economic and military power. A shift to China, while not a direct threat, could upend alliances in the Indo-Pacific region at a time when U.S. and Chinese militaries increasingly butt heads in the South China Sea.

The outgoing Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John Hyten last week said that the pace at which China is developing military capabilities is “stunning,” and on track to surpass the United States “if we don't do something to change it.”

A major example of the speed at which Beijing is moving was a test in August of a hypersonic weapon that partially orbited Earth, reentered the atmosphere and rocketed towards its target which it missed by less than 30 miles.

Milley called the test “very concerning” and “very close” to being a “Sputnik moment,” referring to the Soviet Union's 1957 launch of the world’s first space satellite that gave Moscow a lead in the space race and shocked the United States.

China has maintained that the test was “a spacecraft, not a missile.”

On Wednesday, Milley called the launch indicative of “a much, much broader picture of a military capability with respect to the Chinese.”

“Today [China] has capabilities in space and cyber, land, sea, air, undersea, and they are clearly challenging us regionally. ... So we have a case here of a country that is becoming extraordinarily powerful, that wants to revise the international order to their advantage. That's going to be a real challenge over the coming years. In the next 10, 20 years. That's going to be really significant for the United States.”

That view was reflected in the Pentagon’s latest report on China’s military power, released Wednesday, that details a country that is aggressively building its nuclear stockpile, developing new missile capabilities and bolstering its armed forces, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Beijing continued its efforts to advance its overall development including steadying its economic growth, strengthening its armed forces, and taking a more assertive role in global affairs,” according to the nearly 200-page report.

China since 2018 has been named as the top defense threat to the country alongside Russia, but its latest advancements had congressional Republicans this week sounding the alarm on its growing threat.

“We are in the most, I believe, the most endangered position our country has ever been in terms of what China is demonstrating, clearly, what they have the capability of doing,” Senate Armed Services Committee ranking member James Inhofe (R-Okla.), said in a news conference Tuesday.

And after the Pentagon’s report, Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), ranking member of the House Armed Services committee, said in a statement that the United States needs to respond to China with “unprecedented defense modernization.”

“This report should crystallize for the Biden Administration what has been self-evident for some time – that China poses a real and imminent threat. Kicking the can down the road for our own military modernization is no longer an option,” he continued.

Analysts have also picked up on China's growing nuclear capabilities, with the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) on Tuesday releasing a report detailing three apparent missile silos that are in development in the cities of Yumen, Hami and Ordos.

Hans Kristensen, one of the authors of the FAS report, told The Hill that Washington should be more concerned about Beijing modernizing its military on the conventional side, which doesn't involve nuclear weapons.

"Especially sort of vis-à-vis Taiwan, but of course, also in the South China Sea. Because those are areas in which a conventional war could erupt, or clash, and out of that situation could sort of erupt an escalation into potential use of nuclear weapons," Kristensen said. "But of course, it takes that conventional war to break out first."

Experts and officials worry that China's growing military might is indicative of plans to eventually seize control of Taiwan, the self-governed island that Beijing views as a rogue part of its territory.

That concern has increased in recent months as Beijing has amped up its provocations against Taipei, flying warplanes into its air identification zone 150 times over the course of about four days in early October.

The presence of U.S. forces on the island, including those meant to train Taiwanese troops, has since been revealed.

Senior U.S. military officers including Milley numerous times this year warned that China in several years could make a bid for the island, a concern repeated on Thursday by a top Taiwan security official.

National Security Bureau Director-General Chen Ming-tong said that China has internally considered attacking Taiwan's Pratas Islands but said it would hold off on the move until 2024, according to Reuters.

And Milley on Wednesday said China likely wouldn't make a move in the near future, "but anything can happen."

Complicating matters is Washington's long-held pledge to help Taiwan defend itself in such an attack, which is unclear on what exactly it would do to deter China — a scenario that could trigger a conflict between the two superpowers.

The U.S. has operated under a policy of "strategic ambiguity" with Taiwan, providing it defensive arms and allowing for unofficial relations but not supporting its independence.

President Biden on Oct. 21 appeared to take a firmer stance when he said the U.S. government has a "commitment" to protect Taiwan, but the White House quickly walked that back and said U.S. policy was not changing.

It remains to be seen how the Pentagon intends to tackle the challenge, but it's likely to feature heavily in its soon-to-be-released Nuclear Posture Review, part of the Biden administration's National Defense Strategy, as well as its upcoming Missile Defense Review.

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HEADLINE	11/05 Not in labor force: 100,450,000 no jobs
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnsnews.com/article/national/susan-jones/100450000-more-100-million-not-labor-force-14th-straight-month-no-job">https://www.cnsnews.com/article/national/susan-jones/100450000-more-100-million-not-labor-force-14th-straight-month-no-job</a>
GIST	(CNSNews.com) - The Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics announced on Friday that 100,450,000 people in this country were not in the labor force in October, up 38,000 from the 100,412,000 in September.

This is the 14th straight month that this "not in the labor force" number has remained above 100,000,000.

Persons who are neither employed nor unemployed are not in the labor force. This category includes retired persons, students, those taking care of children or other family members, and others who are neither working nor seeking work.

Among those not in the labor force in October, 1.3 million persons said they were prevented from looking for work due to the pandemic. This measure is down from 1.6 million in September.

The number of people not in the labor force reached a record high of 103,418,000 in April 2020, as the pandemic took hold; and the highest it's been under President Joe Biden is 100,708,000 this past February.

With so many people not in the labor force, the labor force participation rate has remained stubbornly low in recent years, and it did not budge in October.

In October, the civilian non-institutional population in the United States was 261,908,000. That included all people 16 and older who did not live in an institution, such as a prison, nursing home or long-term care facility.

Of that civilian non-institutional population, 161,458,000 were participating in the labor force, meaning they either had a job or were actively seeking one during the last month. This resulted in a labor force participation rate of 61.6 percent in October, the same as September -- and only 0.2 points higher than the 61.4 percent when Biden took office.

The labor force participation rate reached a Trump-era high of 63.4 percent in January 2020, just before the onset of COVID. The labor force participation rate has remained within a narrow range of 61.4 percent to 61.7 percent since June 2020.

The Congressional Budget Office has noted that a lower labor force participation rate is associated with lower gross domestic product and lower tax revenues. It is also associated with larger federal outlays, because people who are not in the labor force are more likely to enroll in federal benefit programs, including Social Security.

BLS said 531,000 jobs were added to nonfarm payrolls in October, which was above analysts' estimates. That compares with the initial disappointing showing of 194,000 jobs added in September. But that 194,000 has been revised upward to 312,000 jobs added in September. BLS also said the change in total nonfarm payroll employment for August was revised up by 117,000, from +366,000 to +483,000. With these revisions, employment in August and September combined is 235,000 higher than previously reported.

According to BLS, job growth was widespread, with notable job gains in leisure and hospitality, in professional and business services, in manufacturing, and in transportation and warehousing. Employment in public education declined over the month.

The unemployment rate dropped by 0.2 percentage point to 4.6 percent, as the number of employed Americans increased (153,680,000 in September to 154,039,000 in October) and the number of unemployed dropped (7,674,000/September to 7,419,000/October).

This is the lowest unemployment rate since the 4.4 percent recorded in March 2020 under President Donald Trump. The Trump-era low was 3.5 percent.

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rate for adult men (4.3 percent) declined in October. The jobless rates for adult women (4.4 percent), teenagers (11.9 percent), Whites (4.0 percent), Blacks (7.9 percent), Asians (4.2 percent), and Hispanics (5.9 percent) showed little or no change over the month.



	<p>In October, BLS said 11.6 percent of employed persons teleworked because of the coronavirus pandemic, down from 13.2 percent in the prior month. These data refer to employed persons who teleworked or worked at home for pay at some point in the 4 weeks preceding the survey specifically because of the pandemic.</p> <p>In October, 3.8 million persons reported that they had been unable to work because their employer closed or lost business due to the pandemic. This measure is down from 5.0 million in September.</p> <p>In October, average hourly earnings for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls increased by 11 cents to \$30.96, following large increases in the prior 6 months. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have increased by 4.9 percent.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Help wanted: downsizing hiring process</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/help-really-wanted-no-degree-work-experience-or-background-checks-11636196307">https://www.wsj.com/articles/help-really-wanted-no-degree-work-experience-or-background-checks-11636196307</a>
GIST	<p>U.S. companies are downsizing the hiring process.</p> <p>Beauty product retailer The Body Shop is dropping <a href="#">educational requirements</a> and background checks for job applicants. <a href="#">United Parcel Service</a> Inc. is making some job offers in as little as 10 minutes. CVS Health Inc. no longer requires college graduates to submit their grades.</p> <p>In a <a href="#">labor market</a> where job openings outnumber applicants, companies are brainstorming how to get more candidates in the door and to the floor. The hiring overhaul signals a potentially broad rethink of job qualifications, a change that could help millions of people enter jobs previously out of reach, according to economists and workforce experts.</p> <p><a href="#">Employers added 531,000 jobs</a> in October and the unemployment rate fell to 4.6% from 4.8%, the Labor Department reported Friday, indicating that companies are filling openings at a faster clip than in recent months.</p> <p>A lot has changed since the aftermath of the 2008-09 recession, when high unemployment and a flood of applicants provided companies with their pick of candidates. Many employers raised job qualifications—for instance, asking for bachelor’s degrees for IT help-desk jobs and construction supervisors, work historically held by high-school graduates. Some bumped up minimum work-experience requirements.</p> <p>New data from labor-market analytics firm EMSI Burning Glass and the Conference Board, a private research group, suggest that 1.4 million jobs will open to people without college degrees in the next five years if employers continue to lower educational requirements at the current rate. In January 2019, 42% of employment ads for insurance sales agents called for a bachelor’s degree, the data show. In September 2021, 26% did.</p> <p>Loosening requirements opens opportunities to some of the nearly two-thirds of American adults who don’t have bachelor’s degrees but may have the skills or aptitude to perform many well-paying jobs.</p> <p>The shift may already be narrowing the gap in unemployment rates between college graduates and those without degrees. In October, the jobless rate for workers with only a high-school diploma fell to 5.4% from 5.8% in September, according to the Labor Department. The rate for college graduates dropped to 2.4% in October from 2.5% a month earlier.</p> <p>Employers and economists are divided over whether the changes are temporary. “When you have a labor market like this, it’s not uncommon for employers to start relaxing hiring requirements,” said Jason Tyszko, vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Center for Education and Workforce. “When the market tightens up, and they can reintroduce some of those additional requirements, that tends to happen.”</p>

On the other hand, a shrinking American workforce could recast hiring practices. The U.S. labor force has declined by millions since the Covid-19 pandemic, and some economists say workforce participation rates will never return to pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, more employers have reconsidered the value of college-degree requirements, focusing instead on skill-based hiring.

One consequence of such a shift would be to draw formerly overlooked applicants into the workforce. “That’s the silver lining in all this,” Mr. Tyszko said.

Companies absorbing workers with little experience may have to spend more time on training. And some of the newly hired may find they don’t like the work. Yet in the tight labor market, businesses already struggling with employee turnover may have little choice.

In retail and fast-food industries, keeping employees for even 90 days is difficult, human-resources executives said, one reason some companies offer bonuses to workers who stay on the job that long.

### **Open call**

In 2019, when the U.S. unemployment rate hovered around 3.6%, The Body Shop introduced a pilot program at a distribution center in Wake Forest, N.C., to remove nearly every hiring requirement, from drug tests and background checks to education and work experience.

The company said it was trying to address inequality by opening positions to workers seeking a second chance or needing extra support. More than 200 seasonal employees came aboard.

Last year, The Body Shop expanded open hiring to all seasonal entry-level retail jobs. Since its launch, the rate of performance-related terminations of people hired in the pilot program has been about the same as the rate among people hired through the routine screening process, said Nicolas Debray, The Body Shop president for the Americas.

Open hiring became the model for all of the company’s entry-level retail and warehouse hires this year. By mid-September, 733 employees had joined the company this way, and 80 joined the company’s permanent staff. Under the system, recruiters ask candidates only if they are legally authorized to work in the U.S.; whether they can lift 25 pounds (50 pounds for distribution center work) and work an 8-hour shift. For retail jobs, applicants are asked why they want to work with customers.

The retailer, owned by Brazilian beauty conglomerate Natura & Co., recently held a holiday-jobs fair for the Wake Forest distribution center. A good turnout and speedy hiring allowed recruiters to close the fair early.

Companies often worry that loosening job requirements will create a perception among customers or employees that businesses are lowering standards, said Alicia Sasser Modestino, a labor economist at Northeastern University.

“The biggest challenge is that people second-guess a person’s ability to do the job, and maybe they have some doubt or suspicion and biases also because we don’t do the background check,” The Body Shop’s Mr. Debray said. Though some managers worried that instances of employee stealing or fighting would increase, he said, “We have not seen any pickup of incidents at all.”

Joshua Taybron was arrested in 2019 and charged with the murder of a man in his hometown of Durham, N.C. Prosecutors dropped the charges, court records show, but Mr. Taybron worried his job prospects were ruined.

Last year, he saw a billboard advertising openings at The Body Shop’s Wake Forest distribution center. He applied and, despite his lack of work experience or high school diploma, he was hired to pull items off shelves and prepare them for delivery. He was terminated soon after because of poor attendance.

A few months ago, his former supervisor called and asked him to reapply. He was rehired at \$16 an hour and promised to do better. Mr. Taybron, 33, said he hoped to be hired for a permanent position after the holidays.

“They take a chance on people,” he said, “and it works out as long as you do your part.”

City councils and state legislatures in the past few years have passed dozens of ban-the-box laws, eliminating a box to check on job applications for those with a criminal record. The laws are intended to let employers consider an applicant’s qualifications before deciding if past convictions disqualify them. Employers can still make background checks before hiring anyone.

Staff shortages are hobbling growth at residential cleaning company 00 Clean Inc. in Tampa, Fla. The company is trying to increase its 21-person workforce by 50% and sign up new clients while demand for its services is soaring, Chief Executive Ole Bredberg said.

Yet the company won’t compromise on a requirement that candidates have a year or more of professional cleaning experience, even though it could take as long as 18 months to hire 10 experienced cleaners.

“In the past we have tried to hire people who show a good attitude and good character when we interview them,” Mr. Bredberg said. “Then they start working and completely underestimate how tough this job really is.”

Mr. Bredberg is trying other hiring strategies: spending more on recruiting services, raising the average hourly rate above \$14, adding paid vacation time and a bonus plan for cleaners. Meanwhile, his staff is working overtime.

Job seekers still run up against requirements they say are unnecessary. Cara Stotler, 43, of Westminster, Colo., has more than a decade of experience selling telecommunications services to business clients. But when she returned to the job market in May, she saw that even entry-level sales jobs called for a college degree.

Ms. Stotler, who had attended community college but didn’t finish, said she submitted many applications but was invited to only a few interviews. In August, she enrolled in an online bachelor’s program in business administration. After adding that to her résumé, she landed a sales position last month.

“Most of my career, they wanted experience,” Ms. Stotler said. “They didn’t focus on degrees, which is probably why I put off going to school for so long.”

### **Skill set**

The move to ease education requirements dovetails with skill-based hiring, an employer strategy gaining momentum. It reduces reliance on degrees as a proxy for skills, and instead bases hiring decisions on demonstrable abilities.

Earlier this year, CVS scrapped requirements for a high-school diploma or the equivalent for most entry-level roles. The company also no longer requires grade-point averages when recruiting college students.

Jeff Lackey, a vice president of talent acquisition at CVS, likened the company’s recruiting approach to that of a Nascar team, stripping out every unnecessary element that slows down a race car.

“If it’s not needed,” he said, “you cut it out.”

The company found that a higher grade-point average didn’t always equate to better job performance. “So why are we using it?” Mr. Lackey said.

CVS in recent years also expanded its use of virtual-job tryouts for customer-facing roles. The aim of the role-playing exercise is to give entry-level applicants a realistic view of the work, and to let hiring

managers assess the aptitude and skills of applicants. That made it easier to cut the high-school education requirement.

“If you can pass the virtual job tryout...then why isn’t that good enough?” Mr. Lackey said. “It is good enough.”

Darden Restaurants Inc., the parent of Olive Garden, rolled out a new tool this year to allow people to apply for a job and schedule an interview at its restaurants within five minutes. Waste Management Inc. this year retooled job applications for truck drivers and others that takes three minutes to fill out instead of as long as an hour. The goal is to prevent potential hires from walking away.

“If an application gets complicated or complex, they drop it, they’re not interested,” said Shweta Kurvey-Mishra, vice president of organizational and talent development at Waste Management.

Southwest Airlines Co. is making some on-the-spot offers for ramp workers and other positions. Chief Executive Gary Kelly said on a call with analysts last month that the company had turned to new hiring techniques. Southwest aims to hire 5,300 people this fall and 8,000 next year.

At shipping giant UPS, human-resources executives realized months ago that the company would need to streamline hiring practices if it hoped to bring on 100,000 seasonal workers for the holidays. After study, UPS eliminated job-application questions and hiring steps unless they were required for payroll purposes and government audits, said Matt Lavery, the company’s global director of sourcing and recruiting.

To broaden the applicant pool, the company eliminated extended questions about an applicant’s employment history for the seasonal jobs. Human resources executives tallied the number of trips job seekers made to company buildings before landing an offer, seeking another way to lower hiring hurdles.

A two-week hiring process for seasonal UPS workers now takes less than 30 minutes, in certain cases. For some jobs, such as driver helper, there is no interview at all. Applicants answer online questions and can get a conditional job offer in as little as 10 minutes.

Successful applicants hear from a UPS employee after they pass the online screening. Then they are welcomed to UPS and told where to report for work.

“In the market that we’re in, if you don’t make a job offer to someone somewhat quickly, someone else will,” Mr. Lavery said.

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HEADLINE	11/06 Cash payments to migrant families back on
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10172275/Joe-Biden-vigorously-DEFENDS-compensation-payments-families-separated-border.html">https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10172275/Joe-Biden-vigorously-DEFENDS-compensation-payments-families-separated-border.html</a>
GIST	<p>President <a href="#">Joe Biden</a> furiously defended a plan to send payments to families separated at the southern border Saturday, days after calling a report that the payments were as much as \$450,000 'garbage.'</p> <p>Biden was speaking at a press conference touting the passage of the \$1.2trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill when he was asked about the payments.</p> <p><a href="#">Fox News</a> David Spunt asked: 'You said last week, that this report about migrant families at the border getting payments was garbage.'</p> <p>Biden interrupted: 'No I didn't say that, let's get it straight, you said everybody coming across the border gets \$450,000.'</p> <p>Biden then was forceful in saying he would try to get payments to those families, criticizing former President Donald Trump's border policy.</p>

'If in fact, because of the outrageous behavior of the last administration, you coming across the border - whether it was legal or illegal.'

Raising his voice into a yell, the president continued: 'And you lost your child, you lost your child, it's gone, you deserve some kind of compensation, no matter what the circumstance,' he said. 'What that will be, I have no idea.'

Last week it was revealed that officials from the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services are considering the payments that could total close to \$1 million for two people within the same family, people familiar with the plans told the [Wall Street Journal](#).

The American Civil Liberties Union, which represents the separated families, has identified about 5,500 children separated from parents at the border during the course of the Trump-era policy.

Former [President Trump](#)'s administration enacted the separation policy in April 2018 and withdrew it two months later after much controversy in June.

The total potential payout could cost \$1 billion or more.

The 'zero-tolerance policy' applied to families who illegally crossed the US-Mexico border to claim asylum. Since children could not be detained alongside their parents, the families were separated, sometimes with no way to track and reunited them later on, government investigations found.

Now, many families are released into the interior of the US and asked to appear in court at a later date. Some are deported under Title 42, the coronavirus public health policy.

Lawsuits allege that the separated children were housed in poor conditions, and sometimes suffered from malnutrition or heat exhaustion or were kept in freezing cold rooms and offered little medical care. Lawyers for the families argue the children have suffered long-lasting trauma from the anxiety of being without their parents.

They seek a range of payouts, averaging \$3.4 million per family, according to the WSJ.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, a Trump loyalist, said Tuesday he is 'very, very concerned' about the payments declaring them to be a 'slap in the face' with Americans themselves already struggling to make ends meet as inflation boosts the cost of living.

'I mean, you think about it, Americans are getting more in their gas bills. They're getting more in their grocery bills,' DeSantis said during a press conference. 'You've had all kinds of really bad policies throughout our country that have limited freedom.'

'And you're going to turn around for that and you're going to do \$475,000 for an individual that came illegally to this country?' DeSantis decried.

On Wednesday, Biden denied the report and accused the media of putting out 'garbage.'

Speaking at a press conference on the authorization of COVID-19 vaccines for kids aged 5 to 11, the 78-year-old Democrat was asked whether the reported payments 'might incentivize more people to come over illegally.'

'If you guys keep sending that garbage out, yeah,' Biden retorted. 'But it's not true.'

He was then asked, 'So this is a garbage report?'

Biden stood by his aggressive reaction.

'Yeah. \$450,000 per person, is that what you're saying?' Biden asked. 'That's not going to happen.'

Biden then faced heavy criticism from liberal groups, with the ACLU issuing a statement slamming the Democrat.

'President Biden may not have been fully briefed about the actions of his very own Justice Department as it carefully deliberated and considered the crimes committed against thousands of families separated from their children as an intentional governmental policy,' ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero said later on Wednesday.

'But if he follows through on what he said, the president is abandoning a core campaign promise to do justice for the thousands of separated families. We respectfully remind President Biden that he called these actions 'criminal' in a debate with then-President Trump, and campaigned on remedying and rectifying the lawlessness of the Trump administration. We call on President Biden to right the wrongs of this national tragedy.'

The saga continued into Thursday, when White House principal deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that President Biden is 'perfectly comfortable' with cash payouts to migrant families separated at the border, but insisted the settlements won't be as high as \$450,000.

Jean-Pierre, standing in for Jen Psaki after her COVID diagnosis, responded by saying that settlements were happening, and he was responding to the claim that they could be close to half-a-million dollars.

'If it saves taxpayer dollars and puts the disastrous history of the previous administration's use of "zero tolerance" and family separation behind us, the President is perfectly comfortable with the Department of Justice settling with the individuals and families who are currently in litigation with the US government,' she said.

She wouldn't specify the amount the Biden administration would spend in the settlements and referred all other questions to the Department of Justice.

The disputed financial offerings have been heavily criticized by Republicans, who unveiled legislation on Thursday aimed at blocking the payments.

The lawmakers are led by Rep. Tom McClintock of California, the ranking member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship. He said the reported plan 'adds insult to injury' amid a months-long border crisis.

McClintock is introducing the bill, the Illegal Immigration Payoff Prohibition Act, and it will be co-sponsored by 137 of his GOP colleagues including House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California and Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, Fox reports.

It's the first widespread effort by Republicans to stop a reported plan to pay \$450,000 per person or up to \$1 million per family for migrants who crossed the border illegally and were separated under Donald Trump's 'zero-tolerance' policy.

GOP lawmakers have vehemently attacked the proposal, comparing it to giving money to someone breaking into your home.

It's meant to amend the US attorney general's power to hand out financial settlements.

If passed, Biden's Attorney General Merrick Garland would be blocked from making payments to undocumented migrants that are directly linked to them running afoul of immigration laws, including entering the country illegally.



'Law-abiding, hardworking Americans have seen their purchasing power decimated by Biden's economic policies while he has surrendered our southern border,' McClintock said in a statement obtained by Fox.

'Paying illegal immigrants \$450,000 apiece as an apology for Trump's decision to enforce our immigration law adds insult to injury. Congress has the power of the purse, and that's why we must act today to stop this outrageous plan in its tracks.

Lawyers for both the families and the government have said that they are working on settlements and hope to be finished by the end of November.

But some government lawyers are outraged at the payments under discussion, which they view as excessive for people who knowingly broke the law by crossing the border. One government lawyer threatened to remove his name from the case in protest of the potential settlement offer.

One government attorney said that the payouts could amount to more than the government paid to the families of 9/11 victims and Gold Star families. Another disputed that comparison, as the US government had not been directly responsible for the 9/11 attack. Payouts averaged \$2 million, tax-free, per family.

So far, 45 House Republicans including House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, GOP Caucus Chair Rep. Elise Stefanik and Rep. Dan Crenshaw, have put their name to a demanding answers from the Biden administration.

'Promising tens of thousands of dollars to those who unlawfully entered the United States would not only reward criminal behavior, but it would surely send a message to the world that our borders are open and our rule of law will not be enforced,' the letter states.

A record 1.7 million families were encountered trying to enter the US illegally in the 2021 fiscal year, ending September 30, up from a record 1.6 million in 2000. Over 479,000 families were encountered, along with an unusually high number of unaccompanied children - 147,000.

Inadequate tracking systems caused many to be apart for an extended time. The payments are intended as compensation for what occurred.

Attorneys for the families are also seeking permanent legal status in the United States for those separated under the practice enacted by former President Trump's administration in April 2018.

A judge halted the process after much controversy in June 2018, six days after Trump suspended it amid an international backlash.

The 'zero-tolerance policy' applied to families who illegally crossed the US-Mexico border to claim asylum. Since children could not be detained alongside their parents, the families were separated, sometimes with no way to track and reunited them later on, government investigations found.

Now, many families are released into the interior of the US and asked to appear in court at a later date. Some are deported under Title 42, the coronavirus public health policy.

Lawsuits allege that the separated children were housed in poor conditions, and sometimes suffered from malnutrition or heat exhaustion or were kept in freezing cold rooms and offered little medical care. Lawyers for the families argue the children have suffered long-lasting trauma from the anxiety of being without their parents.

The Biden administration has repeatedly deemed the policy cruel and inhumane and promised to reunited families still separated.

	<p>Earlier this month, Michelle Brane, head of the Family Reunification Task Force, said that the Biden team had only been able to reunite 52 of the over 1,000 families separated under the policy who have not yet found each other.</p> <p>'We estimate that over 1,000, somewhere between 1,000, 1,500, maybe more remain separated,' Brane said on CBS' 60 Minutes on October 12. 'It's very hard to know because there's no record.'</p> <p>She added: 'So there's nowhere to go to find out who was separated or not. It really is case-by-case detective work.'</p> <p>The task force is reportedly in the process of reuniting 200 more.</p> <p>Reunited families are then given a three-year grant of parole, allowing them to live and work legally in the US for that period, but are not offered a pathway to citizenship.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Infrastructure package: what's in?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/28/politics/infrastructure-bill-explained/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/28/politics/infrastructure-bill-explained/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>Updated 11:50 PM ET, Fri November 5, 2021</p> <p>(CNN)Congress passed a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package Friday, approving a signature part of <a href="#">President Joe Biden's</a> economic agenda.</p> <p>It will deliver \$550 billion of new federal investments in America's infrastructure over five years, touching everything from bridges and roads to the nation's broadband, water and energy systems. Experts say the money is sorely needed to ensure safe travel, as well as the <a href="#">efficient transport of goods and produce</a> across the country. The nation's infrastructure system <a href="#">earned a C- score</a> from the American Society of Civil Engineers earlier this year.</p> <p>Democrats claim the bill pays for itself through a multitude of measures and without raising taxes. But the <a href="#">Congressional Budget Office</a> brushed aside several of those pay-for provisions, ultimately finding the bill would add \$256 billion to the deficit over the next 10 years. It's significantly smaller than the \$2.25 trillion proposal that Biden unveiled in March, known as the <a href="#">American Jobs Plan</a>.</p> <p>Here's what's in the infrastructure bill:</p> <p><b>Funding for roads and bridges</b></p> <p>The bill calls for investing \$110 billion for <a href="#">roads, bridges and major infrastructure projects</a>. That's significantly less than the \$159 billion that Biden initially requested in the American Jobs Plan.</p> <p>Included is \$40 billion for <a href="#">bridge repair, replacement and rehabilitation</a>, according to the bill text. The White House says it would be the single, largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system, which started in the 1950s.</p> <p>The deal also contains \$16 billion for major projects that would be too large or complex for traditional funding programs, according to the White House.</p> <p>Some 20%, or 173,000 miles, of the nation's highways and major roads are in poor condition, as are 45,000 bridges, according to the White House.</p> <p>The investments would focus on <a href="#">climate change mitigation</a>, resilience, equity and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>Also in the package is \$11 billion for transportation safety, including a program to help states and localities reduce crashes and fatalities, especially of cyclists and pedestrians, according to the White</p>

House. It would direct funding for safety efforts involving highways, trucks, and pipeline and hazardous materials.

And it contains \$1 billion to [reconnect communities](#) -- mainly disproportionately Black neighborhoods -- that were divided by highways and other infrastructure, according to the White House. It will fund planning, design, demolition and reconstruction of street grids, parks or other infrastructure.

### **Money for transit and rail**

The package would provide \$39 billion to modernize public transit, according to the bill text. That's less than the \$85 billion that Biden initially wanted to invest in modernizing transit systems and help them expand to meet rider demand.

The funds would repair and upgrade existing infrastructure, make stations accessible to all users, bring transit service to new communities and modernize rail and bus fleets, including replacing thousands of vehicles with zero-emission models, according to the White House.

The deal would also invest \$66 billion in passenger and freight rail, according to the bill text. The funds would eliminate Amtrak's maintenance backlog, modernize the Northeast Corridor line and bring rail service to areas outside the Northeast and mid-Atlantic regions, according to the White House. Included in the package is \$12 billion in partnership grants for intercity rail service, including high-speed rail.

The funding is less than the \$80 billion Biden originally wanted to send to Amtrak, which [he relied upon for decades](#) to get home to Delaware from Washington, DC.

Still, it would be the largest federal investment in public transit in history and in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak 50 years ago, according to the White House.

### **Broadband upgrade**

The bill would provide a \$65 billion investment in [improving the nation's broadband infrastructure](#), according to the bill text. Biden initially wanted to invest \$100 billion in broadband.

It also aims to help lower the price households pay for internet service by requiring federal funding recipients to offer a low-cost affordable plan, by creating price transparency and by boosting competition in areas where existing providers aren't providing adequate service. It would also create a permanent federal program to help more low-income households access the internet, according to the White House fact sheet.

### **Upgrading airports, ports and waterways**

The deal would invest \$17 billion in port infrastructure and \$25 billion in airports to address repair and maintenance backlogs, reduce congestion and emissions near ports and airports and promote electrification and other low-carbon technologies, according to the White House.

It is similar to the funding in Biden's original proposal.

### **Electric vehicles**

The bill would provide \$7.5 billion for zero- and low-emission buses and ferries, aiming to deliver thousands of electric school buses to districts across the country, according to the White House. Another \$7.5 billion would go to building a nationwide network of plug-in [electric vehicle](#) chargers, according to the bill text.

### **Improving power and water systems**

The bill would invest \$65 billion to rebuild the electric grid, according to the White House. It calls for building thousands of miles of new power lines and expanding renewable energy, the White House said. It would provide \$55 billion to upgrade water infrastructure, according to the bill text. It would replace lead service lines and pipes so that communities have access to clean drinking water, the White House said.

Another \$50 billion would go toward making the system more resilient -- protecting it from drought, floods and cyberattacks, the White House said.

### **Environmental remediation**

The bill would provide \$21 billion to clean up Superfund and brownfield sites, reclaim abandoned mine land and cap orphaned gas wells, according to the White House.

How Congress will pay for it

The bill includes a multitude of measures to pay for the proposal.

But while lawmakers claim the bill pays for itself, the CBO score found it would instead add billions of dollars to the deficit over 10 years and that many of the pay-for provisions would not raise as much money as Democrats said they would.

The bottom line is that the legislation would directly add roughly \$350 billion to the deficit, when taking into account \$90 billion of spending in new contract authority, said Marc Goldwein, senior vice president at the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a nonpartisan group that tracks federal spending.

According to the bill text and a 57-page summary of the bill, lawmakers leaned heavily on repurposing unused Covid-19 relief funds to pay for the legislation. The CBO found these measures would provide roughly \$22 billion in savings, rather than the roughly \$263 billion claimed by lawmakers, Goldwein said.

The bill text lists savings from rescinding unobligated appropriations for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program for small businesses and nonprofit groups, the [Paycheck Protection Program](#), the [Education Stabilization Fund](#) and relief for airline workers, among others.

Another item in the bill text is \$53 billion that stems in part from states opting to [terminate the pandemic unemployment benefits early](#) in hopes of [pushing the jobless to return to work](#). Some 24 states stopped at least one of the [federal unemployment programs](#) before they officially ended in early September. Also, the CBO reduced its forecast for the unemployment rate because of the improving economy.

Also, the agency found that the Federal Communications Commission's [spectrum auctions](#) would generate far less than the \$87 billion originally claimed by lawmakers.

The CBO also said that the bill would raise about \$50 billion by imposing new Superfund fees and changing the [tax reporting requirements for cryptocurrencies](#), among other measures.

More savings would come from delaying a [controversial Trump administration rule](#) that would radically change how drugs are priced and paid for in Medicare and Medicaid until 2026, at the earliest. The measure would effectively ban drug makers from providing rebates to pharmacy benefit managers and insurers. Instead, drug companies would be encouraged to pass the discounts directly to patients at the pharmacy counter. It is currently expected to go into effect in 2023. The summary lists the savings as \$49 billion and the CBO report as nearly \$51 billion.

Also, the infrastructure proposal relies on generating \$56 billion in economic growth resulting from a 33% return on investment on the long-term projects, according to the summary.

Biden has said that the bill won't raise taxes on people making less than \$400,000 a year and does not include a gas tax increase or fee on electric vehicles. He initially called for raising taxes on corporations to fund the infrastructure investments -- but that proposal did not make it into the latest package after strong opposition from Republicans.

What's missing

The bill leaves out Biden's proposal to spend \$400 billion to bolster caregiving for aging and disabled Americans -- the second largest measure in the American Jobs Plan.

His proposal would have expanded access to long-term care services under Medicaid, eliminating the wait list for hundreds of thousands of people. It would have provided more opportunity for people to receive care at home through community-based services or from family members.

It would also have improved the wages of home health workers, who now make approximately \$12 an hour, and would have put in place an infrastructure to give caregiving workers the opportunity to join a union.

Also left on the sideline: \$100 billion for workforce development, which would have helped dislocated workers, assisted underserved groups and put students on career paths before they graduate high school. The bill also leaves out the \$18 billion Biden proposed to modernize Veterans Affairs hospitals, which are on average 47 years older than private-sector hospitals.

What's also out is a slew of [corporate tax hikes](#) that Biden wanted to use to pay for the American Jobs Plan.

Biden's original proposal called for raising the corporate income tax rate to 28%, up from the 21% rate set by Republicans' 2017 tax cut act, as well as increasing the minimum tax on US corporations to 21% and calculating it on a country-by-country basis to deter companies from sheltering profits in [international tax havens](#).

It also would have levied a 15% minimum tax on the income the largest corporations report to investors, known as book income, as opposed to the income reported to the Internal Revenue Service, and would have made it harder for US companies to acquire or merge with a foreign business to avoid paying US taxes by claiming to be a foreign company.

There are some [corporate tax raising provisions](#) that Democratic lawmakers are looking to include in the separate legislation aimed at [expanding the nation's social safety net](#).

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HEADLINE	11/07 Sydney to further ease Covid curbs
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/sydney-further-ease-covid-19-curbs-monday-vaccinations-pick-up-2021-11-07/">https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/sydney-further-ease-covid-19-curbs-monday-vaccinations-pick-up-2021-11-07/</a>
GIST	<p>Nov 7 (Reuters) - Australia's largest city of Sydney will further ease social distancing curbs on Monday, a month after emerging from a coronavirus lockdown that lasted nearly 100 days, as close to 90% of people have got both doses of vaccine, officials said.</p> <p>Although limited to people who are fully inoculated, the relaxation in the state of New South Wales, home to Sydney, lifts limits on house guests or outdoor gatherings, among other measures.</p> <p>"We're leading the nation out of the pandemic," said state premier Dominic Perrottet, as he called for a "final push" to reach, and even surpass, a milestone of 95% vaccinations.</p> <p>Several hundred people held an anti-vaccine protest on Sunday in the state's capital of Sydney, but such opposition is slight in Australia, where polls show vaccination opponents number in the single digits.</p> <p>The southeastern state of Victoria recorded the majority of Australia's 1,417 new coronavirus cases, with public health figures showing 10 more deaths.</p> <p>There were no new infections in the remote Northern Territory, where a snap lockdown was extended until midnight on Monday to tackle a small outbreak in some areas.</p> <p>Australia crossed the 80% mark of full inoculations on Saturday.</p>

	<p>"That should give us all confidence in terms of opening up," federal finance minister Simon Birmingham told broadcaster Channel 9 in an interview on Sunday.</p> <p>Australia eased international border curbs on Monday for the first time during the pandemic, but only for its vaccinated public from states with high levels of inoculation.</p> <p>However domestic travel is still hindered, as most states and territories keep internal borders shut. Western Australia state will re-open when it hits the 90% level of double vaccine doses, its premier said.</p> <p>Despite the Delta outbreaks that brought lockdowns for months in the two largest cities of Sydney and Melbourne, Australia's tally of COVID-19 infections is far lower than many developed nations, at just over 180,000 cases and 1,597 deaths.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Wages rising; keep up with inflation?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/business/economy/wages-inflation.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/business/economy/wages-inflation.html</a>
GIST	<p>American workers are taking home bigger paychecks as employers pay up to attract and retain employees. But those same people are shelling out more for furniture, food and many other goods and services these days.</p> <p>It is not yet clear which side of that equation — higher pay or higher prices — is going to win out, but the answer could matter enormously for the Federal Reserve and the White House.</p> <p>There are a few ways this moment could evolve. Wage growth could remain strong, driven by a tight labor market, and overall inflation could simmer down as supply chain snarls unravel and a surge in demand for goods eases. That would benefit workers.</p> <p>But troubling outcomes are also possible, and high on the list of worries is what economists call a “wage-price spiral.” Employees could begin to demand higher pay because they need to keep up with a rising cost of living, and companies may pass those labor costs on to their customers, kicking off a vicious cycle. That could make today’s quick inflation last longer than policymakers expect.</p> <p>The stakes are high. What happens with wages will matter to families, businesses and central bankers — and the path ahead is far from certain.</p> <p>“It’s the several-trillion-dollar question,” said Nick Bunker, director of research for the hiring site Indeed.</p> <p>For now, wage growth is rapid — just not fast enough to keep up with prices. One way to measure the dynamic is through the Employment Cost Index, which is reported by the Labor Department every quarter. In the year through September, the index’s measure of wages and salaries jumped 4.2%. But an inflation gauge that tracks consumer prices rose 5.4% over the same period.</p> <p>A different measure of pay, an index that tracks hourly earnings, did rise faster than inflation in August and September after lagging it for much of the year.</p> <p>And an update to that gauge Friday showed that wages climbed 0.4% in October, which is roughly in line with recent monthly price increases. Over the past year, that measure is up 4.9%. But the data on hourly earnings have been distorted by the pandemic, because low-wage workers who left the job market early in 2020 are now trickling back in, jerking the average around.</p> <p>The Labor Department reported Friday that the U.S. economy added 531,000 jobs in October, cutting the unemployment rate to 4.6%, down from 4.8% in September, in a sign that employers are feeling more optimistic as the latest coronavirus surge eases. Economists polled by Bloomberg had been looking for a gain of 450,000 jobs.</p>



The October gain was an improvement from the 312,000 positions added in September — a number that was revised upward Friday, along with the August figure, providing a more upbeat picture of the last few months.

The increase in employment was broad, with sizable gains at restaurants and bars as well as in factories and offices. And in another sign that conditions are gradually returning to normal, the proportion of employed people who worked remotely at some point last month fell to 11.6% from 13.2%.

“This was a strong employment report that shows the resilience of the labor market recovery from the pandemic,” said Scott Anderson, chief economist at Bank of the West in San Francisco. “I think we will see a pretty strong bounce back in economic growth in the fourth quarter.”

The job picture has improved across most demographic groups. The unemployment rate for women, Hispanics, Asians and those without a college degree all ticked downward. Black unemployment, however, remained flat at 7.9%, nearly twice the rate for white workers.

That racial gap is likely to present a serious test of the Fed’s fresh emphasis on balancing its mandate to control inflation with the goal of “maximum inclusive employment,” as officials call it.

“It’s a euphemism, but something the Fed takes very seriously,” said Diane Swonk, chief economist at the accounting firm Grant Thornton. If the current surge in price increases does not abate by early next year, and both internal and external pressure to prioritize price stability takes precedence, then “patience may run out sooner than people think,” she said — and sooner than Jerome Powell, the Federal Reserve chairperson, would like.

The upshot is that the tug of war between price increases and pay increases has yet to decisively swing in workers’ favor.

Whether wage gains eventually eclipse inflation — and why — will be crucial for economic policymakers. Central bankers celebrate rising wages when they come from productivity increases and strong labor markets, but would worry if wages and inflation seemed to be egging each other upward.

The Federal Reserve is “watching carefully,” for a troubling increase in wages, Powell said Wednesday, though he noted that the central bank did not see such a trend shaping up.

Recruiters do report some early signs that inflation is factoring into pay decisions. Bill Kasko, president of Frontline Source Group, a job placement and staffing firm in Dallas, said that as gas prices in particular rise, employees are demanding either higher pay or work-from-home options to offset their increased commuting costs.

“It becomes a topic of discussion in negotiations for salary,” Kasko said.

But for the most part, today’s wage gains are tied to a different economic trend: red-hot demand for workers. Job openings are high, but many would-be employees remain on the labor market’s sidelines, either because they have chosen to retire early or because child care issues, virus concerns or other considerations have dissuaded them from working.

A federal supplement to unemployment benefits expired in early September and experts are watching whether the end of that assistance — and a depletion of savings accumulated from other emergency programs — increases the availability of workers. So far, those effects have been muted.

“For the last 25, maybe 30 years, labor has been on its back heels and losing its share of the economic pie,” said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody’s Analytics. “But that dynamic is now shifting.”

Emily Longworth Nixon, 27 and from Dallas, is one of Kasko’s employees. She tried to recruit a woman to an executive assistant position at a technology company that would have given her a \$30,000 raise —

and saw the candidate walk away for a counteroffer of no additional pay but three work-from-home days each week.

“After that, I had my tail between my legs for a couple of days; I had never thought to ask that,” she said, adding that employers need to know their candidates like never before as workers flex their power, taking home raises and other perks. “Before COVID, it was an employer-driven market.”

Those in-demand workers could end up being better off in the long run, should their pay continue to chug higher even as supply chains heal and prices for used cars and couches moderate, allowing them to afford more.

Pay gains might also become more sustainable for employers as virus concerns fade and employees trickle back from the labor market’s sidelines.

And even if rapid wage increases persist, it is not absolutely the case that employers will be forced to drastically raise prices. Businesses could stomach a hit to their profits instead, or they could invest in technology that improves worker productivity.

If fewer waitresses can sell the same number of dinners because customers are ordering from QR codes, for instance, employers will have leeway to pay more without taking a hit to their bottom line.

But a happy outcome is not guaranteed. If today’s high prices do drive tomorrow’s wage negotiations and set off an upward spiral, the result could be a longer period of high inflation that prods the Fed to raise interest rates to tamp down demand and cool off prices, slowing the economy and possibly even sending it back into a recession.

“We haven’t seen a wage-price spiral for decades, but we haven’t seen inflation like this for decades, either,” said Jason Furman, a Harvard University economist and former economic adviser in the Obama administration, calling the possibility of a wage-driven spiral “an open question.”

A scenario like that has not taken place since the 1970s and 1980s. But a situation like the pandemic lockdowns and subsequent reopening has never happened at all.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Front lines mental health emergencies</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mental-health/what-its-like-to-work-on-the-front-lines-of-mental-health-emergencies-in-the-seattle-area/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mental-health/what-its-like-to-work-on-the-front-lines-of-mental-health-emergencies-in-the-seattle-area/</a>
GIST	<p>The front lines of mental health start in a person’s mind and body. Depending on the day, external stressors, resources or medication, that landscape gets smoother or rockier to navigate.</p> <p>But it doesn’t end there.</p> <p>The front lines shift and intersect in many environments: It can be a classroom or office, a hospital or church, a jail or shelter. Ultimately what begins as a personal experience ripples through a whole community, affecting not just the person experiencing mental health issues but their families, friends and neighbors.</p> <p>And while we all have mental health (just like we have physical health), some live with mental illness, a wide range of conditions spanning mood disorders, addiction, PTSD and more.</p> <p>It’s estimated over a million Washingtonians — or about 1 in 5 people in the state — have mental illness. That is likely an undercount, and calls for behavioral health crises steadily climbed since the COVID-19 pandemic began.</p>

On the front lines to serve people with mental illness are about 12,500 people in King County, including substance use disorder counselors, behavior technicians and analysts, and a dozen other roles credentialed through the Washington Department of Health. About a quarter of them are social workers. Together with nurses, medical assistants and other health care staff, they work daily to care for people with mental health needs in Seattle and across the Puget Sound region.

While triage nurses and doctors in the emergency department treat trauma wounds, clinical social workers and psychiatric nurses are looking for signs of a mental health crisis. That could mean people who are perhaps eating or sleeping less, experiencing suicidal ideation, or psychosis, when they hear or see things that aren't there. Patients are brought in by family and friends, on gurneys via ambulance, or by law enforcement. Some come in alone and willingly, others alone and involuntarily.

And while hospitals are a key part of the front lines, when it comes to mental health the needs are everywhere and anywhere. Luckily, the people working to help others are also close by. Here's what some of them want you to know about their jobs, what they struggle with, and what keeps them going through it all.

### **Rachelle White, Harborview Medical Center**

A social worker's job includes evaluating patients as they come into the emergency department, asking questions about their mental health history, their housing status, and whether they've had recent changes in their life. They check in with the person's family or friends, and come up with the next steps, whether that's a referral to another treatment center or an overnight stay at the hospital.

"Really the job of the social worker is to think about how to make sure that this person is safe, and that we create a safe and reasonable plan," said White, a supervisor at Harborview Medical Center who oversees 25 social workers in the emergency department.

Harborview is one of the only hospitals in the Seattle area with a specific psychiatric emergency services unit, or PES, as White calls it. It has 10 beds, where patients ideally stay for no more than a couple hours before being discharged or transferred to an inpatient facility like Fairfax Behavioral or Overlake Medical Center. But inpatient beds are limited. Some patients are considered complex cases and facilities won't accept them.

"There's also like a million pieces of that puzzle," White said. "If somebody does require hospitalization, you have to know the systems, the different facilities. How do we get authorization from the insurance company?"

Sometimes patients leave against medical advice.

"It is complex. You have to really be thoughtful. To know when to say, 'That's not gonna work.' When to be more concerned about a person," White explained.

### **Silvia Riley, MultiCare Behavioral Health**

"We don't have weapons, we don't have sirens," said Riley, a director of crisis services at MultiCare Behavioral Health. "But we are available 24/7, holidays and weekends."

During the day, Riley works with about 15 staff including designated crisis responders, care coordinators and clinicians. At night, it dwindles to just two people. The MultiCare team is contracted to respond to behavioral and mental health emergencies for the 900,000 residents of Pierce County. They sometimes ride along with law enforcement and have the ability to bring patients to the emergency room, whether voluntarily or through an involuntary commitment.

To be committed, a person in crisis must be 13 or older and a threat to themselves, others or property. Or they must have a grave disability and be decompensating: They stop eating or taking care of themselves or their home.

The bar for commitment is high, “And it should be,” Riley believes. “People have rights. This is my bread and butter, but I’m the first one to say civil detention, it’s not the answer.”

Riley, who has worked in mental health services for 30 years, recalled past health and safety violations at Western State Hospital and the impact on institutionalized psychiatric patients. For her, the strength of mobile teams is that they can divert people from two key places: jail and the ER. Instead of detoxing in an emergency room bed or being charged with crimes, Riley wants patients to be able to access treatment. Funding is limited, though, and she said fragmented services pose yet another barrier for her clients.

### **Dae Yang Kim, Sound**

Every morning Kim gets a referral list.

Every person on it is involuntarily committed to a hospital in King County and is usually at one of the most vulnerable points in their life.

Kim, a clinician with Sound, a behavioral health provider, first meets with the highest priority cases (for example, people who are not already connected to outpatient services) and tries to discuss options: what services people are eligible for, how to get home if they have one, and sometimes whether clients even want care.

The responses run the gamut: “Some of them are violent. Some of them are friendly. Some of them are very lethargic and can’t really speak. Some of them are manic and can’t really remember the conversation the next time you go,” Kim said.

Kim doesn’t take the spectrum of reactions personally: Involuntary hospitalization can be traumatizing, making people lose trust in providers and overall more skeptical of treatment.

Kim works to build relationships, visiting a couple times a week until the client is discharged, sometimes meeting with them for up to 90 days through what’s called the transition support program. Sound’s team has six clinicians in this program, with around 18 clients each. The clients are sometimes in transitional housing, on the street, in hospitals or in the general community.

Sometimes the plans the clinicians make with their clients fall apart.

“You kind of make plans and goals, and then — boom — once they get out, you can’t really find them,” Kim said. Without addresses or phone numbers it’s hard to track people down.

Other times clients don’t get access to care because all the hospital beds are prioritized for COVID-19 patients, and in rare and heartbreaking situations clients die.

“I’ve had clients that I go to check on in the ER, and the front desk told me they passed away,” Kim said. “It’s just kind of a surreal moment. You got to just kind of learn to live with that and just keep pushing.”

### **Genevieve Ameling, Virginia Mason-Franciscan Health**

On an average day at work, Ameling, a clinical social worker at Virginia Mason Franciscan Health, gets a handful of patients; some might be experiencing suicidal ideation, others could be intoxicated and exhibiting psychosis-like symptoms.

“Emergency departments become de facto detox facilities because there isn’t anywhere else to send people in that moment,” says Ameling.

Every shift she waits for at least one person to come down from a methamphetamine high before she can screen them for behavioral disorders. It can take hours for the person to metabolize the drug, if not a full 12-hour shift. People can be talkative and excited, and sometimes patients try to take their clothes off because they are too warm (excessive sweating is a side effect of the drug). At times it’s necessary to restrain them physically or chemically with antipsychotic medication.

In the past, Ameling sent people on Medicaid to two different detox centers in Seattle. One shut down at the start of the pandemic, and the other is still open but only Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Unfortunately patient needs don't always align with those hours. And if patients are also experiencing homelessness, it's hard to come up with a treatment plan. According to a 2020 survey documenting homelessness in King County, job loss was the reason most often cited for homelessness, followed by drug and alcohol use, and mental health issues. When those same people were asked to self-report if they've dealt with a psychiatric or emotional condition like depression or schizophrenia, however, 54% also said yes.

Ameling's 10 years in crisis mental health work has transformed her into a housing-first advocate, and she sees it as a vital step in the recovery process.

"If you want people to get better, if you want our community to get better, you need to provide housing."

### **Winnie Agwazim and Freyton Castillo, Downtown Emergency Service Center — Crisis Solutions Center**

When Agwazim, project manager for the Downtown Emergency Service Center's mobile crisis team, goes into the field to serve clients, she is armed with nothing but her partner, a pen and clipboard.

In 30 minutes to an hour, she tries to intervene in an acute crisis, whether she's on the street with someone or in a home. The goal is to make sure a client is safe enough to be moved to DESC's Crisis Solutions Center, where they can get a place to sleep and eat, do laundry or shower. Or the client can be taken to the emergency room, if they choose.

Lately, the work has been more challenging. When Agwazim got a call recently, what should have been a standard 20-minute response became a two-hour interaction trying to get a client to sit in a car so they could be transported to Harborview.

"The police just refused to help," she said, frustrated. Since new police reform legislation went into effect, setting standards for when police can use force, social workers and behavioral health staff have noted law enforcement is less likely to intervene.

"They're just choosing to misinterpret that (law)," she said. "I actually had to tell a police officer, 'Someone is going to get hurt.' And he said, 'Yes, that's true.' Somebody doesn't have to get hurt for us to change things."

Housing is another challenge, said Castillo, program manager at the Crisis Solutions Center.

The facility has 46 crisis beds for all of King County and demand is always higher than supply. COVID restrictions mean beds have to remain spaced out and programs that would offer food or clothing have shut down or lost volunteers. While DESC would like to provide housing within a two-week period, it can't guarantee that; instead it has another team that works with clients over a 90-day period, setting them up with a caseworker and therapist and building support networks with church groups or community organizations.

"It's trying to serve folks that are slipping through the cracks, but still gives them access to services before they even get to that [crisis] point, or after they get to that point," says Castillo.

The theory is that it takes a village to make and keep someone healthy after a mental health emergency.

For her part, Agwazim sees the work as her duty to give back.

"I believe in doing good because somebody has helped my whole family somewhere," Agwazim said, thinking of her family in Nigeria.

	“I’m hoping to make a change in someone’s life.”
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 ‘Game changer’: \$8.6B to WA infrastructure</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/infrastructure-package-is-an-8-6-billion-game-changer-for-washington-state/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/infrastructure-package-is-an-8-6-billion-game-changer-for-washington-state/</a>
GIST	<p>As more details emerge about the new federal infrastructure package, the scale of its impact in and around Seattle and across Washington is coming more sharply into focus— and it’s big.</p> <p>Under the \$1.2 trillion dollar Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which <a href="#">Congress approved late Friday</a>, Washington will see nearly \$8.6 billion in dedicated funds and billions more in potential grants for everything from highways and bridges to electric vehicle charging stations and broadband to public transit and safer drinking water.</p> <p>The result will be a massive, necessary boost for a state where infrastructure construction and funding hasn’t kept up with population growth or economic expansion.</p> <p>“We view it as a game changer,” said Peter Rogoff, CEO of Sound Transit, which will get around \$380 million in dedicated funding for the regional light rail system, and will also compete for federal grants.</p> <p>Under the IIJA package, Washington over the next five years will receive around \$4.7 billion for highways and \$605 million for bridges and another \$1.8 billion in public transportation spending; \$882 million to improve drinking water infrastructure and safety; and \$385 million for the state’s airports, including \$228 million for Sea-Tac International Airport and \$16 million for Paine Field in Snohomish County, according to estimates provided by the White House.</p> <p>There’s also \$100 million to expand access to broadband internet to nearly a quarter million state residents who don’t have it and \$71 million to expand the state’s electric vehicle charging network; and even funds for salmon recovery, including \$1 billion for national efforts to remove stream culverts.</p> <p>“Add this all up and it is billions and billions of dollars for Washington State,” said Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Seattle, who helped negotiate the House measure, which passed 228 to 206.</p> <p>But there was also local disappointment over what wasn’t in the IIJA.</p> <p>Missing were several earlier, more ambitious proposals to cut carbon emissions to reduce climate change. Also absent were earlier proposals to expand the infrastructure concept to include such things as child care and paid leave, which is “really important to families with young kids,” said Jennie Romich, a professor in the University of Washington School of Social Work and an expert in poverty and social policy. Despite efforts by progressive Democrats, Romich said, “the ‘child care is infrastructure’ argument didn’t make it in.”</p> <p>Many of those ideas had been in more expansive, and expensive, proposals by the White House and progressive House Democrats, but were gradually stripped away in the face of strong resistance by party moderates and Republicans.</p> <p>Democrats plan to include some of those proposals in a separate \$1.75 trillion measure dubbed the Build Back Better Act. That’s expected to bring yet another showdown between party moderates and progressives, with Jayapal and Washington Democratic Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray playing key roles.</p> <p>Still, the IIJA includes what many are calling historic amounts of federal cash for much-needed infrastructure improvements in Washington, where critics say infrastructure spending has lagged for years.</p>

The state has 416 bridges and more than 5,400 miles of highway that are in poor condition, according to a White House summary of the infrastructure package.

The IIJA will also help Washington's airports and marine ports keep up with the state's rapidly expanding population and export-focused economy, Cantwell said.

"Our trade and port infrastructure really employs a lot of people in our state, and it's really key to our competitiveness," Cantwell said. "Because if someone doesn't think their product can move quickly through our ports, they'll choose other places."

That trade focus is expected to help Washington secure a large share of the grant funding offered under the legislation. The IIJA includes multibillion dollar grants that Washington and local governments and agencies can bid for and potentially use on projects such as marine port upgrades, improved rail crossings and even a new bridge between Washington and Oregon. Washington's large port sector, a key export conduit for goods from the Midwest and other regions, makes the state a top contender for funding, Congressional aides said.

The boosts in grant funding are also expected to help lower the region's share in the rising costs of Sound Transit light rail, said Rogoff. For example, where the federal share of the Federal Way and Lynnwood expansion costs was just 25% and 36%, respectively, Sound Transit hopes to get "a much higher federal share" for West Seattle, Tacoma and Everett expansions under the infrastructure measure, Rogoff said.

"And obviously every dollar we get from the federal government to build out those projects is one less dollar that our local taxpayers need to pay for those same projects," he said.

Policy experts cautioned against expecting an immediate impact from the infrastructure measure.

Unlike much of the federal spending in the pandemic, which was aimed at bailing out laid-off workers or struggling businesses, "this is not a quick stimulus injection," said James McCafferty, a director at the Center for Economic and Business Research at Western Washington University.

"You can't design a road or bridge and build it overnight," added Debra Glassman, a teaching professor of finance and business economics at the University of Washington Foster School of Business. "We'll be seeing the effects roll out over a period of years. At the end of that time, we'll look back and be able to see that this bill was big and transformational."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Assessment: WA needs 80 tsunami towers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/state/washington/article255544626.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/state/washington/article255544626.html</a>
GIST	<p>When a tsunami is headed your way, the only escape might be to go up. Washington's coast is woefully unprepared for that option. High ground is scarce and every second counts, according to a new state assessment.</p> <p>What's more, Washington becomes more due for a major earthquake with every passing year. "We're certainly in that window. It can happen at any time," said Maximilian Dixon, the geologic hazards supervisor for the Washington Emergency Management Division. "And it's definitely something that keeps you up at night."</p> <p>The agency wanted to know how many people who live in tsunami inundation areas in Cascadia Subduction Zone could benefit from an evacuation tower or other form of vertical refuge. According to the assessment, Pacific County needs between 25 and 40 structures, Grays Harbor could use 30-42 structures and Clallam County needs up to three. As of now, only two evacuation structures exist in Washington. One is part of an elementary school near Westport, and the other is a tower under construction by the Shoalwater Bay Tribe near Tokeland and should be completed in early 2022.</p>



The structures are needed because people might have only a few minutes to walk to safety to avoid a tsunami caused by an offshore 9.0 magnitude earthquake. In some vulnerable areas, it can take up to an hour to walk to safety.

So, why not drive?

“You’re going to have severe damage to bridges, to roadways, fires, liquefaction, trees and telephone poles falling down,” Dixon said. “You’re going to have folks that are potentially panicking, getting into accidents. So the likelihood of someone being able to find their car keys, get into their car and have a clear path to drive to safety is very, very low.”

The last so-called megathrust earthquake and tsunami happened in 1700. Geologic evidence shows they’ve occurred on the Cascadia fault every 400-600 years going back thousands of years. The fault, between two of Earth’s plates, is just offshore. The shift in the seabed causes the resulting tsunami.

The January 1700 tsunami was recorded by historians in Japan. Oral histories of coastal tribes on the North American coast tell of a great earthquake and tsunami that struck on a winter evening that wiped out low-lying villages.

The 50-foot-high tower that will soon rise near Tokeland will have two refuge platforms above the predicted tsunami height. The useable area of 3,400 square feet will accommodate 386 people. Waves of 60-feet-high are projected to strike Ocean Shores in a major tsunami.

Any structure used as a tsunami refuge has to be the height of the tallest predicted wave plus another 30 percent, Dixon said. Because many refuge structures will be built on sandy soils, it’s important they sit on below-ground piers, Dixon said. A series of waves could wash away soil around the tower’s legs. Another feature that provides stability, he said, is an open leg design which allows water to pass through the structure without destabilizing it.

Designs vary, but most are a combination of concrete, metal and wood. Evacuation towers were already in place in March 2011 when coastal Japan, a country that has invested billions in earthquake preparedness, was hit by a major tsunami following a 9.0 earthquake off its coast.

The towers saved lives, according to UNESCO. Towers have also been constructed in New Zealand.

The first waves of a tsunami could arrive in 10 to 15 minutes after the ground stops shaking on the Washington coast, Dixon said.

Puget Sound wasn’t part of the study because the kind of mega quake caused by the offshore Cascadia Subduction Zone would give residents at least an hour or more to get to high ground before the first wave hits.

The towers aren’t cheap, often carrying million dollar-plus price tag. But, governments can apply for grants — something now made easier by the study, Dixon said. “These structures are absolutely essential for saving lives,” Dixon said.

“The buildings out there on the coast are, first of all, not high enough, but also they’re not built to withstand the entire force of the ocean, hitting them over and over with multiple waves.”

The study assessed the best location on the highest ground but still within a walkable distance of vulnerable populations, Dixon said. Areas that were deemed both high risk and highly populated included Long Beach in Pacific County, Aberdeen in Grays Harbor County and Neah Bay in Clallam County.

The study also accounted for rising ocean levels from climate change as well as projected subduction, or lowering of the ground, in a major quake. The assessment was conducted by the University of

	Washington's Institute for Hazards Mitigation Planning and Research. It was funded by a NOAA Tsunami Activities grant.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 October jobs report: strong rebound</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/october-jobs-report-unemployment-rate-2021-11636061282?mod=hp_major_pos2#cxrecs_s">https://www.wsj.com/articles/october-jobs-report-unemployment-rate-2021-11636061282?mod=hp_major_pos2#cxrecs_s</a>
GIST	<p>The U.S. labor market sprang back to life in October after a summer slowdown, with employers briskly adding jobs and nearly 200,000 women joining the labor force.</p> <p>The economy churned out 531,000 new jobs last month, the biggest gain in three months, the Labor Department said Friday. Restaurants, consulting firms and factories all boosted hiring, suggesting broad strength across the economy. Nationwide job growth was also stronger in August and September than previously estimated, with new data boosting employment over that period by 235,000 jobs.</p> <p>The unemployment rate fell to 4.6% in October from 4.8% a month earlier, and is down by more than half a percentage point in just two months.</p> <p>Stocks marched higher, and bond yields fell after the strong report.</p> <p>The U.S. still has four million fewer jobs than in February 2020, the month before the pandemic shut down much of the economy, and the unemployment rate remains higher than the pre-pandemic level of 3.5%. But Friday's report showed the economy rebounding from the summer wave of the Delta variant, a highly contagious strain of Covid-19. Employers say they are eager to hire and are raising wages as they compete over a depleted pool of workers.</p> <p>That shortage may be easing. About 180,000 female workers aged 16 and older joined the labor force in October, as Covid-19 cases declined and schools reopened. Economists say women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic because many work in fields that involve human interaction, such as teaching. While the gain in female workers last month was modest, it boosted hopes that more workers on the sidelines would rejoin the search as virus cases continue to fall, offices and childcare facilities reopen and more children become vaccinated.</p> <p>Friday's report "points to evidence that we can and will have stronger job growth going into next year," said Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, a global forecasting firm. "The idea that somehow we've reached a new post-Covid normal and that we're not going to see stronger job growth because labor supply is constrained and there are going to be permanent labor shortages is simply misguided."</p> <p>It also showed the economy was making progress toward the Federal Reserve's goal of maximum employment. Fed officials haven't specified what that would look like, but many of them in September indicated they expected the unemployment rate should reach around 4% over the long run. The unemployment rate is now below the 4.8% level that a majority of Fed officials anticipated at the end of this year.</p> <p>The Fed has said it would keep interest rates near zero until inflation is projected to moderately exceed its 2% target and until hiring conditions are consistent with maximum employment. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell indicated on Wednesday that the central bank has probably met the first goal because inflation has been <a href="#">running above its target</a> this year.</p> <p>That means officials will be paying close attention to hiring gains as they determine when to raise interest rates. Friday's report suggests that if the current pace of hiring continued, that second goal could be achieved around the time the Fed has finished ending its asset-purchase program, which is on track to occur by June.</p>

Higher wages could lead to higher inflation, if companies raise prices to collect the extra money that households rake in. The average hourly wage for private-sector workers rose 0.4% in October from a month earlier and 4.9% compared with a year ago. In the 15 years before the pandemic, wages grew an average 2.5% a year.

Elevation Labs is a prime example of the current state of the labor market. The Idaho Falls, Idaho-based cosmetics manufacturer makes mainly skin-care products from factories in Idaho and Colorado. As consumers step up shopping, business is booming. Sales rose 6% last year and are up another 37% this year, chief executive Michael Hughes said. The company hopes to add up to 50 workers to its workforce of 680. But it is struggling to find workers, even after raising wages and expanding benefits.

Since the pandemic, the company has raised hourly wages for entry-level workers by \$2 to \$12.50 and plans to raise them to \$15 starting Jan. 1, 2022, Mr. Hughes said. It also started offering four weeks of parental leave, which it plans to increase to 12 weeks next year. And it began allowing workers to work four-hour shifts, which gives them more flexibility in going home to care for children.

After those moves, he said, the company has seen a slight increase in applicants, but hiring remains tight. “We as employers need to get very creative about tapping into what hours people can work, relative to daycare challenges, relative to school challenges,” Mr. Hughes said. “The message for factory managers is we can’t have this cookie cutter solution because it suits your leadership team or production schedule.”

He said he thought a high level of household savings might be removing the urgency for some adults to return to work. Some economists agree.

After rounds of federal stimulus money, unemployment insurance and a child-care tax credit, households—collectively, at least—built up a cushion during the pandemic. However, those savings—which at one point exceeded \$2 trillion, according to private sector estimates—have dwindled, though they remain elevated. As savings come down, some adults will return to the workforce starting in the winter, some economists say.

Employers are entering a crucial period, with holiday shopping season looming and consumers spending more freely. Retailers and leisure and hospitality industries say they need to ramp up hiring to meet the demand.

Among them is Amazon.com Inc., which has boosted wages to \$18 an hour for many employees and last month said it planned to hire 150,000 seasonal workers in the U.S.

The biggest obstacle to further gains is the labor force, economists and business leaders say. In October, the labor force grew by 104,000 people, entirely due to an increase in female workers. Participation among men fell. But the overall gain in the labor force was modest, leaving the participation rate at 61.6%, near the lowest level since the 1970s.

Economists are debating whether the depleted labor force is temporary or permanent. One big factor behind the smaller labor force is the exit of millions of older workers who have decided to retire early rather than try to get their jobs back, according to research from the St. Louis Federal Reserve. Friday’s report showed that while the participation rate among all working-age adults was flat in October, the rate among those considered in their prime working years—25 to 54 years old—rose modestly.

Some economists say that the lack of stronger participation growth amid strong wage growth is a sign of structural problems. “We’re increasingly convinced that the fall in participation since the beginning of the pandemic will prove permanent,” Michael Pearce, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics, said in a note to clients.

Even with last month’s pickup in job growth to an average of 582,000 jobs a month this year, growth remained below the monthly average of 641,000 jobs that the economy created in the first seven months of the year.

	<p>The pandemic has complicated the government’s efforts to account for seasonal factors, such as the late summer hiring of teachers, into its estimates. The Labor Department said the August and September job revisions “result from additional reports received from businesses and government agencies since the last published estimates and from the recalculation of seasonal factors.”</p> <p>Job growth is expected to remain steady throughout the rest of the year because of several factors. Delta cases declined. Employers desperate to hire to meet strong demand from consumers are rapidly raising wages, dangling bonuses and offering more flexible hours. And households are spending down savings that had been boosted by federal stimulus money and extra unemployment benefits.</p> <p>“People are having to change industries, change careers, so that slows down that pace of recovery,” said Sarah House, senior economist at Wells Fargo. “At the same time you still have ongoing constraints,” among them workers’ persistent fears about getting sick and a lack of affordable childcare that is preventing many parents from returning to their old jobs.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/05 Calif. city sets highest minimum wage in US</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/05/west-hollywood-votes-highest-minimum-wage-us">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/05/west-hollywood-votes-highest-minimum-wage-us</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>West Hollywood will provide the highest minimum wage in the US after the city council voted to raise pay in the city to \$17.64 an hour.</p> <p>The wage hike will start taking affect in January for some workers and will gradually increase every six months until July 2023, eventually surpassing California’s minimum wage, which is set to reach \$15 by 2022 for workplaces with more than 25 employees. California has the highest minimum wage of any state.</p> <p>Relatively few of the 20,000 jobs in West Hollywood provide a wage high enough that workers can afford living there, city councilmember John D’Amico said.</p> <p>“Fewer than 10% of our jobs pay enough to live in the city,” D’Amico said. “I believe we are now righting the founding wrong of this city. Keeping West Hollywood workers in a position where they cannot be our neighbors and worse, they have to learn how to live without a reliable income, this has to finally no longer be acceptable.”</p> <p>Some local business owners spoke against the increase, arguing that businesses were still struggling to recover from the pandemic and that the pay raise would push companies out of the city, while restaurant owners said their workers were already highly compensated.</p> <p>“If we raise the minimum wage now it’s going to be counterproductive,” said Lisa Vanderpump, a former star of the Real Housewives of Beverly Hills who owns three restaurants in the city. “You’re going to see so many people who are going to find it unsustainable.”</p> <p>The council voted unanimously to approve the increase. The ordinance allows employers that can show the rise would shut down their business to request a one-year waiver. City leaders said they recognized the challenges that businesses face, but that a pay rise was crucial for workers and the city.</p> <p>“[The] cost of living is rising everywhere – it’s getting more &amp; more expensive to live, work and raise a family. Our minimum wage should reflect that reality,” councilmember Lindsey P Horvath said.</p> <p>The ordinance also expands paid vacation, sick and personal time for workers.</p> <p>Hotel workers will see a minimum wage of \$17.64 starting 1 January, and all other employees will begin seeing a rise in July 2022. The new rate surpasses that of Emeryville, which currently has the highest minimum wage in the country at \$17.13 an hour.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/06 Relief, reunions: US lifts travel restrictions
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/06/us-finally-lifts-covid-travel-restrictions-reunions-relief">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/06/us-finally-lifts-covid-travel-restrictions-reunions-relief</a>
GIST	<p>On 8 November, the US will ease restrictions that effectively halted tourism and non-essential travel from 33 countries, including the UK, most of Europe and China. The restrictions have separated families and loved ones, with thousands missing out on birthdays, holidays – and in the case of the British tennis star Emma Raducanu’s parents – a US Open final.</p> <p>Now all visitors with a WHO-approved vaccination (which includes AstraZeneca) will be allowed to visit the US. Visitors with passports from any country where fewer than 10% of the country’s population has been vaccinated will also be allowed.</p> <p>Virgin Atlantic say bookings to the US, largely to New York, have <a href="#">surged</a> 600% since the announcement was made. Delta Air Lines’ CEO, Ed Bastian, has predicted an “onslaught of travel all at once”, in November with queues likely at airports. Hotel prices in New York are also returning to normal levels after a summer where discounts abounded.</p> <p>Tourism industry experts expect this surge to last for a while. “The pent-up demand from overseas to visit the US will remain strong for at least several years,” Tim Hentschel, HotelPlanner’s co-founder and CEO, told the Guardian.</p> <p>Some form of travel ban has been in place since the start of 2020, Donald Trump issued the first proclamation that stopped most travellers from China visiting the US – with the list of banned countries quickly expanding. Land crossings from Mexico and Canada were also banned, although there were exemptions for green cards and some work visas.</p> <p>For many, that ban has only worsened the toll of the pandemic, further isolating people as family members fell ill or life teetered on the edge of what was manageable.</p> <p>Before the pandemic, Diana Jimenez, a 26-year old graphic designer living in Tijuana, Mexico, would cross the border every few months, mostly to see her sister and her family in Wyoming.</p> <p>She says the lack of visitation has been hard in the last year, especially when her father got sick with cancer. After the restrictions are lifted, Jimenez plans on taking a road trip to visit her sister’s family. “We are only the two of us and we are really close,” Jimenez said. She misses her sister dearly, but really it’s her niece who she aches to see: “She’s 12, and she’s the love of my life. I used to clean her diapers when she was a baby,” says Jimenez.</p> <p>Couples have also been split by the travel ban. Georgia Samuel is an Australian citizen who is currently studying for her master’s degree in communications at the University of Southern California, but has a boyfriend living near London. They last saw each other in July, when she moved to the US, but will reunite on 14 November when he flies in. “I was hoping that he’d be able to come to the US with me to help me set up my life,” Samuel said. They had spent many months working on trying to find a way around the ban, “which ultimately just wasn’t possible for us. I really felt like the ban was overextended and overdrawn for at least months, and I was really relieved when it was announced it would be removed.”</p> <p>The concern over travel has led people to seek out advice and vent their frustrations online. On Reddit, a forum called r/UStavelban is filled with stories from people waiting to reunite with loved ones.</p> <p>“Finally, I can meet my girlfriend after 2 years, so we can finally tie the knot after 12 years of courtship,” one user <a href="#">wrote</a> in September.</p> <p>“Although I myself am American, my long time partner is not and has missed my sister’s wedding, has not yet met my nephew, and I’ve ultimately had to forgo these lovely trips to the US without him. Now we’re thrilled to be going home for Thanksgiving this year together as a family!” wrote <a href="#">another</a>.</p>

Although most travellers have been banned there were some loopholes for those with time and resources. The US had allowed most vaccinated tourists from Canada and Mexico to travel via air (but not over the land border) since summer 2021. This meant travellers from Europe and China could stop in the neighbouring countries for 15 days – the amount of time required by US border control – and then cross into the US. It created a surprising boon for long-stay tourism in Mexico, with [some resorts reporting a 50% increase in bookings](#) year-on-year.

Even with borders set to open, there are complications for crossing the border into the US, especially for Mexicans. Traffic at the San Ysidro border in Tijuana is compounded by the rollicking open-air markets on the highways – at the moment this delays crossing by about an hour, but when the border opens to tourists, it is expected to take five or more hours, due to unprecedented demand.

On social media, Spanish-language memes lampoon 8 November as a day when Mexican tourists will gum up traffic so they can go shopping at Ross Dress for Less, a department store popular in southern California.

While most European visitors are able to travel on an Esta visa waiver, most visitors from Mexico will still need to apply for a tourist visa. “We have a group waiting for an appointment at the embassy, and more than 50 families waiting to start their process,” says Heidy Bizarron, a nurse who works with the Federacion de Nayaritas Unidos, which connects separated families between the US and Mexico.

“This is how long the wait has been,” says Bizarron, explaining how the families for whom she’s arranging reunion trips have already been rescheduled twice.

Sometimes, what happens in between the wait is heartbreaking. “There are even fathers or mothers who have not had the opportunity to reconnect with their children, since they die in the process,” says Bizarron.

While Jimenez said that she’s excited that she can see her niece and sister again, she’s still concerned that the rush to travel back into the US could worsen the spread of the virus, and ultimately lead to the border closing once more.

“I’m a little bit worried that if a lot of people go there, it’s going to be people getting sick all over again, and they’re going to close it again,” she said.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Airline flags mixed-race family as trafficking</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/06/mixed-race-family-southwest-airlines-human-trafficking-suspected">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/06/mixed-race-family-southwest-airlines-human-trafficking-suspected</a>
GIST	<p>A mixed-race family has demanded an apology from <a href="#">Southwest Airlines</a>, after a flight attendant flagged them as suspicious, wrongly assuming the white mother was trafficking her biracial child.</p> <p>Mary MacCarthy said her 10-year-old daughter, Moira, now “clams up” when they talk about how an airline employee and two police officers questioned them after their flight landed in Denver on 22 October.</p> <p>“The whole thing is based on what I believe to be a racist assumption about a mixed-race family,” MacCarthy <a href="#">told the Denver Post</a>.</p> <p>After MacCarthy’s brother died, she and Moira traveled last-minute to Denver from Los Angeles – with a connection through San Jose – in order to <a href="#">attend the funeral</a>. MacCarthy, a single mom, said her brother had been a father figure to Moira.</p> <p>MacCarthy said she and her daughter were <a href="#">shocked and sleep deprived</a> when they boarded the plane to Denver last, because they <a href="#">were in the final boarding group</a>. Onboard, other passengers moved so they would not have to be apart. MacCarthy tried to sleep while Moira listened to an audiobook.</p>

When MacCarthy got off the plane in Denver and noticed the officers waiting, she said, [she panicked](#), terrified another family member had died.

But it turned out a flight attendant suspected her of human trafficking, after she and Moira boarded last and asked others to switch seats so they could sit together.

The attendant claimed she never saw MacCarthy and Moira speak and that MacCarthy warned her daughter not to talk with the flight crew, [NBC News](#) reported.

MacCarthy denied that and said she and her daughter were “deeply traumatized by the assumption that just because we don’t have the same skin color we’re involved in a very serious crime”.

In video of the confrontation with police officers, Moira can be heard wailing while MacCarthy tries to explain why she and her daughter are traveling.

“It’s OK, sweetheart,” MacCarthy tells Moira.

“She doesn’t need to be scared,” an officer says. “Because you are not in any trouble whatsoever, OK?”

MacCarthy later tells the officers and a Southwest employee Moira “has already unfortunately been traumatized by the police in her life”.

A police report said the incident was “unfounded”, according to [NBC News](#). But MacCarthy still received a follow-up call from a human trafficking unit investigator.

“Had this little girl been white there would have been not a raised eyebrow,” MacCarthy’s lawyer, David Lane, told NBC. “So race was the only factor that triggered this call to the police.

“It’s Southwest Airlines that I have an issue with. And I think this is a civil rights violation because they are causing a paying customer of theirs to have to undergo the trauma of being stopped by the police.”

Southwest [told NBC](#) it was “conducting a review of the situation internally” and “will be reaching out to the customer to address her concerns and offer our apologies for her experience traveling with us”.

A spokesperson [told SFGate](#) staff “undergo robust training on human trafficking”.

Other mixed-race families have been flagged as suspicious while traveling. A man on another Southwest flight was suspected of [trafficking his adopted Chinese daughter](#) on the way home from a trip to Florida. A Black woman flying Frontier Airlines with her white adoptive sister was [questioned in Dallas](#).

MacCarthy told SFGate she travels with Moira’s birth certificate so she is “prepared for any questions”. She also said she understood the job of the Transportation Security Administration was to make sure they were “traveling under the proper circumstances”.

But that was different from “being accosted by armed police and being told that we’ve been acting suspiciously”, she said. “That’s not the same thing at all.”

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HEADLINE	11/07 Iran annual war games ahead nuke talks
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-begins-annual-war-games-ahead-nuke-talks-81019492">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-begins-annual-war-games-ahead-nuke-talks-81019492</a>
GIST	TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran’s military began its annual war games in a coastal area of the Gulf of Oman, state TV reported Sunday, less than a month before upcoming nuclear talks with the West.



The report said navy and air force units as well as ground forces were participating in a more than 1 million square-kilometer (386,100 square-mile) area east of the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Nearly 20% of all oil shipping passes through the strait to the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean.

The drill comes amid heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S. in the wake of former President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal of America from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

State TV said brigades including commandos and airborne infantry deployed for the annual exercise. Fighter jets, helicopters, military transport aircraft, submarines and drones were also expected to take part in the drill. It wasn't immediately clear how long the exercise would last.

Dubbed "Zolfaghar-1400," the war games are aimed at "improving readiness in confronting foreign threats and any possible invasion," state TV said.

U.S. officials said last week that Iran had seized a Vietnamese-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman last month and was still holding the vessel in its port.

Iran offered conflicting accounts of what happened, claiming that elite Revolutionary Guard commandos had thwarted a U.S. seizure of a tanker carrying Iranian oil in the Gulf of Oman and freed the vessel. It aired dramatic footage on state television but did not further explain the incident.

The nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, promises Iran economic incentives in exchange for limits on its nuclear program, and is meant to prevent Tehran from developing a nuclear bomb.

After the U.S. withdrew from the deal in 2018 and restored sanctions on Iran, the Islamic Republic gradually — and publicly — abandoned the deal's limits on its nuclear development.

Iran says its stockpile of 20% enriched uranium has reached over 210 kilograms (463 pounds), the latest defiant move ahead of upcoming nuclear talks with the West.

Under the historic nuclear deal, Iran was prohibited from enriching uranium above 3.67%. Enriched uranium above 90% can be used for nuclear weapons, though Tehran insists its nuclear program is peaceful.

After months of delays, the European Union, Iran and the U.S. announced last week that indirect talks to resuscitate the deal would resume Nov. 29 in Vienna.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Foreign travelers seek US-approved shots</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/foreign-citizens-seek-us-approved-shots-travel-resumes-81019797">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/foreign-citizens-seek-us-approved-shots-travel-resumes-81019797</a>
GIST	<p>BUDAPEST, Hungary -- As COVID-19 ravaged Hungary in April, Budapest resident Akos Sipos received his second vaccine dose, believing he was doing the right thing for his own health and to help end the pandemic.</p> <p>But Sipos, 46, soon discovered that the vaccine he received, Russia's Sputnik V, disqualified him from traveling to a number of other countries where it hadn't been approved. The nations include the United States, which is pushing forward with a new air travel policy that will make Sipos and many like him ineligible to enter.</p> <p>"I thought it's better to get Sputnik today than a Western vaccine at some uncertain future time," Sipos, who works as a search engine optimization specialist, said of his initial decision to receive the jab. "But I couldn't have known at that time that I wouldn't be able to travel with Sputnik."</p>

Starting Monday, the United States plans to reopen to foreign travelers who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus. But there's a catch: non-immigrant adults need to have received vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration or which received an emergency use listing from the World Health Organization.

That leaves many hopeful travelers across the globe who taken full courses of vaccines widely used in other parts of the world — Sputnik V and the China-produced CanSino jab, in particular — scrambling to get reinoculated with shots approved by U.S. authorities.

Two other Chinese vaccines, Sinopharm and Sinovac, have been approved by the WHO and will thus be accepted for travel into the U.S.

Mexico received nearly 12 million doses of CanSino and almost 20 million of Sputnik V after shipments began earlier this year. Residents who got the required two shots of those vaccines now are looking to top up with shots of the Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca or Johnson & Johnson vaccines, hoping that will make them eligible to cross the border.

“They screwed those of us who got this vaccine,” said Rosenda Ruiz, 52, a public relations manager in Mexico City who received Sputnik V. “There are lots of Mexicans who want to travel, but we can’t. I am thinking of getting whatever other vaccine I can get.”

While Sputnik V is used in around 70 countries worldwide, it has still not been approved by either the FDA or the U.N. health agency. Nearly 1 million people have received the vaccine in Hungary, a Central European country of around 10 million.

Hungary was one of only two countries in the 27-member European Union to roll out the Russian vaccine. Fewer than 20,000 people received it in Slovakia.

Judit Molnar, president of the Association of Hungarian Travel Agencies, says so many Hungarians being unable to travel to the United States — or even to some countries in the EU which don't accept the jab — has had an effect on her industry.

“We see that in the last few months, travelers are increasingly asking us when they can travel to America,” said Molnar, who is also president of the OTP Travel agency.

“These travelers are saying they really hope the situation will change and that the United States will accept the Sputnik vaccine. There are many people who would like to travel and in Hungary, many people were vaccinated with Sputnik,” she said.

Citizens of Russia, where use of Sputnik V is most widespread, also are seeking Western-approved shots so they can travel abroad. Faced with the prospect of being turned away from flights, Russians have booked tours to Serbia, which has authorized use of the Pfizer-BioNTech, China's Sinopharm and the AstraZeneca vaccines in addition to Sputnik V.

Russia, which unveiled Sputnik V with much fanfare as the world's first registered vaccine in August 2020, criticized U.S. plans to leave the vaccine off its list of approved shots.

“There are exactly zero reasons for such decisions,” Leonid Slutsky, chairman of the foreign relations committee in the Russian Duma, or lower house of parliament. “The effectiveness and safety of the Sputnik V vaccine has been proven not only by specialists, but also by its practical application.”

But the World Health Organization still is reviewing the vaccine, and months of holdups make it unclear when Sputnik V might receive an emergency use listing.

	<p>Hungary's government has made bilateral agreements with 24 countries — including Russia, Serbia, Mongolia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan — on mutually recognizing proof of vaccination, regardless of vaccine type.</p> <p>Hungary's Ministry of Foreign Affairs told The Associated Press that it is open to a similar agreement with the United States, but “currently there is no ongoing negotiation.”</p> <p>Sipos, the search engine specialist, said that while he was confident in Sputnik V’s efficacy, he recently sought a Western-approved booster shot, Moderna, so he could travel where he wants.</p> <p>“I felt deceived because they accept Sputnik in more than 60 countries in the world, but in tons of other countries they don’t,” he said.</p> <p>Silvia Morales, 38, a public high school teacher in Monterrey, Mexico, said she recently received a Moderna shot after hearing that the U.S. government wouldn’t recognize her CanSino vaccine.</p> <p>She said she “needed to have peace of mind” about her level of protection against the virus.</p> <p>“But I also love traveling to the United States,” she said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 CDC report: 1,359 Covid cases on cruises</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2021/11/05/covid-cruise-cdc-positive-us/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2021/11/05/covid-cruise-cdc-positive-us/</a>
GIST	<p>A <a href="#">report</a> from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers the first publicly available look at how many <a href="#">coronavirus</a> cases were discovered on cruises in the United States following an industry-wide shutdown. Despite cruise lines’ efforts to impose strict public health <a href="#">rules</a>, covid-19 has still found a way on board.</p> <p>According to the CDC data, cruise operators confirmed 1,359 cases between June 26 and Oct. 21, a roughly four-month period that represents a rebound for the industry. Many of those involved breakthrough infections of people who were fully vaccinated. During that time, operators reported 49 hospitalizations and 38 medical evacuations for covid-19 or covid-like illnesses. At least one person <a href="#">died</a> after testing positive during a cruise.</p> <p>As the government allowed cruises to resume with some restrictions, ships added vaccine requirements, testing rules, capacity limits and mask mandates. Cruise lines have acknowledged positive cases over the past few months, but the full scope was not previously known. The CDC included the numbers in its <a href="#">extension</a> of a “conditional sail order” that outlines operating rules for cruise lines during the pandemic; that order will shift from mandatory to voluntary on Jan. 15.</p> <p>In making the case to extend the order beyond a Nov. 1 expiration date, CDC director Rochelle Walensky wrote that “despite the best efforts of cruise ship operators to provide a safer and healthier environment for crew and passengers,” outbreaks had continued.</p> <p>The document provides several examples, mostly involving breakthrough cases, including one in which a symptomatic passenger who tested positive on a ship in late July was linked to 20 more confirmed cases over two sailings. In that case, 18 service workers and two passengers were infected. One ship reported 58 positive cases between July 24 and Aug. 28, and another reported 105 confirmed cases on four back-to-back trips between Aug. 19 and Sept. 7. One reported 112 cases on four voyages between Aug. 21 and Sept. 7.</p> <p>In each of those cases, the ships reported between 96.4 percent to 100 percent of people aboard were vaccinated.</p>

	<p>Aimee Treffiletti, a captain in the U.S. Public Health Service and lead for the CDC’s maritime unit, <a href="#">told</a> The Washington Post in an interview last week that vaccinations should continue to be “an essential part” of cruise line health plans even after the rules expire.</p> <p>“That’s one of the main reasons we haven’t seen medical systems overwhelmed on board, because we have such high vaccination rates on board,” she said.</p> <p>The CDC does not identify specific ships or companies in its order, but the public health agency does maintain a <a href="#">website</a> showing whether there have been recent cases of covid-19 on ships sailing in U.S. waters.</p> <p>In an email, Cruise Lines International Association spokeswoman Bari Golin-Blaugrund said the trade group estimates that about 600,000 customers sailed aboard ocean ships during the four months since the industry resumed in the United States.</p> <p>“The relatively low occurrence of covid-19 during that period, particularly when compared to the rest of the country, further shows the leadership of the cruise industry and the effectiveness of the science-backed protocols that have enabled a successful return to operations around the world,” she wrote.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Rebels within 200 miles Ethiopia capital</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/11/06/ethiopia-addis-ababa-tplf/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/11/06/ethiopia-addis-ababa-tplf/</a>
GIST	<p>NAIROBI — After a year of grinding conflict in Ethiopia’s mountainous north, thousands of opposition forces this week pushed their way to within 200 miles of the capital Addis Ababa, forcing the city’s residents to gird for the possibility that the war will soon be on their doorsteps and triggering a cascade of frantic preparations across the region.</p> <p>The Ethiopian government has called the fight against former government soldiers and volunteers from the country’s Tigray region an “existential war,” and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who won the Nobel Peace Prize two years ago, has vowed to “bury this enemy with our blood and bones.”</p> <p>Abiy declared a state of emergency that allows for conscription of “any military age citizen who has weapons.” The mayor called on residents to take up arms to secure their neighborhoods. The military asked veterans to reenlist. The U.S. Embassy urged its citizens Friday to leave the country “as soon as possible.” Later Friday, the U.N. Security Council called for an end to the conflict and expressed concern about the impact on <a href="#">“the stability of the country and the wider region.”</a></p> <p>Police in Addis Ababa have begun going door to door, searching for Tigrayans who may be sympathetic to the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, or TPLF, which is leading the rebel offensive and whose members the government considers secessionist terrorists. The TPLF dominated the country’s politics for three decades before Abiy took power, and are deeply resented by many of Ethiopia’s non-Tigrayans.</p> <p>“I live in an apartment, and I have neighbors. In ordinary times, they heard me speak Tigrinya on phone, so some must know,” said Alula Mikaelson, 30, speaking by phone from Addis Ababa. Like many Tigrayans, Alula fled to Addis Ababa at the beginning of the war, seeking to blend in. Tigrayans speak their own language but are physically indistinguishable from numerous other Ethiopian ethnicities.</p> <p>“Even right now, I am speaking to you in a low tone because if someone hears me, they can call the police who will come here and take me,” he said.</p> <p>The crackdown has highlighted the increasingly ethnic nature of the war. Government officials including Abiy have increasingly used inflammatory language when referencing Tigrayans, and the TPLF argues it is fighting for the survival of its people in Tigray, who have been under an effective blockade since the war began last November.</p>

The intransigence on both sides has scuttled hopes of a cease-fire that international mediators including the African Union and the United States were pressing for, and fears have pulsed beyond the country's borders as the heavyweight of this volatile region teeters on the brink of chaos.

With more than 110 million people, Ethiopia is the 12th most populous country in the world and dwarfs its neighbors in population.

"If it is existential for Ethiopia, it is existential for us, too," said a senior Djiboutian official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the matter candidly. He and other diplomatic sources said they were concerned that a rebel push toward Addis Ababa would lead to a surge in refugees seeking to cross into neighboring countries.

Unpublished contingency plans being made by the U.N.'s refugee agency and reviewed by The Washington Post predict hundreds of thousands of refugees may try to enter Djibouti, Kenya and Somaliland, an autonomous region of Somalia.

Addis Ababa, home to around 5 million people, is sometimes referred to as the "capital of Africa" — hosting the African Union headquarters, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and Ethiopian Airlines, the continent's largest and most essential for trade and travel.

While life for some continued on as normal, Tigrayan residents described a fast-moving police operation that had upended any sense of safety in the city and driven most into hiding.

"Everyone is absolutely terrified," said Lemma, 27, an Addis Ababa resident who recently fled to Kenya and spoke on the condition that she be identified only by her second name for fear of reprisals against her family in Ethiopia. "Most of my family do not have passports, and they are being rounded up as we speak and taken to unknown concentration camps."

She said that on Tuesday her 75-year-old uncle, who is diabetic, had been picked up by police at his office, two more cousins on their way to buy food had been detained after police checked their identification cards, which marked them as Tigrayan, and a friend's father was detained at the airport as he tried to board a flight to Rwanda for a medical checkup. None have been reachable since.

Asked about the crackdown, police officials told Reuters that they had made many arrests in recent days of people accused of supporting the rebels.

"We are only arresting those who are directly or indirectly supporting the illegal terrorist group," police spokesperson Fasika Fanta said. "This includes moral, financial and propaganda support."

On Wednesday, the United Nations and Ethiopia's state-appointed human rights body co-released a report detailing the "extreme brutality" meted out by both sides of the conflict on civilians over the last year. The report, while not exhaustive and hampered by restricted access to the conflict zone, documented some of the volleys of heinous recriminations that have driven this war.

Independent human rights groups and news outlets have reported on dozens of atrocities and rampant hate speech. The conflict has taken thousands of lives and spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The TPLF claims to be pushing toward Addis Ababa as a way to force the government to lift restrictions on aid flowing to the region.

While stopping short of saying the government was committing genocide or using starvation as a war tactic, the report alleged extensive crimes by government forces and their allies that could constitute war crimes and decried heavy restrictions on aid supplies to Tigray that have brought hundreds of thousands to the brink of famine. The TPLF also carried out indiscriminate massacres, forced displacement and rapes, the report said.

On Wednesday, Facebook's parent company, Meta, removed a post of Abiy's from Sunday that called on Ethiopians to "bury" the TPLF. Hours later, Abiy posted on Facebook that "a rat that strays far from its hole is nearer to its death."

Abiy's spokeswoman, Billene Seyoum, said there should be "no moral equivalency between a democratically elected government and a terrorist group," and pointed to her own posts on Twitter, where she referred to reports in Western media outlets as "alarmist" and "perpetuating terrorist propaganda." The Ethiopian government has barred access to the conflict zone and denied visas for most foreign journalists hoping to cover the conflict.

The TPLF has marched on Addis Ababa before. In 1991, the group, forged in Tigray's stark mountainous landscape as a guerrilla militia, stormed the city and deposed a Marxist-Leninist regime known as the Derg, which had carried out ethnic cleansing campaigns, killed tens or hundreds of thousands of political opponents, and presided over one of the deadliest famines in modern times.

Then, the TPLF was generally welcomed. But over the next three decades, the group consolidated power and created its own repressive regime. While cultivating close ties with Western powers that saw the group as favorable to the Derg and cooperative on regional security, the TPLF suppressed many of Ethiopia's much larger ethnic groups, including the Amhara and Oromo, creating deep animosity that led to Abiy's rise to power. Abiy is half Amhara and half Oromo.

The Oromo, who make up more than a third of the country's population, in particular have argued that successive Ethiopian governments have actively suppressed them. Many who saw the possibility of change in Abiy were furious when his government jailed the country's prominent Oromo opposition figures. Huge Oromo protests have repeatedly rocked Abiy's tenure as prime minister.

Over the course of 2020, a political dispute brewed between Abiy and the TPLF, which governed the Tigray region. On Nov. 4, 2020, according to the government's version of events, Tigrayan elements in the national military mutinied, killing thousands of non-Tigrayan soldiers and triggering the wider war.

Until this June, the government appeared to be prevailing with military assistance from neighboring Eritrea, but the TPLF has resurged with superior military structure and capabilities cultivated during its years in power, according to former and current diplomats.

For the meantime, the Eritreans have largely withdrawn from the war, though they continue to occupy some areas along the border, the diplomats said, and the Ethiopian military is on the back foot having suffered huge losses through attrition. The TPLF is attempting to build a broader front of armed groups together in opposition to Abiy.

Ethiopia's most powerful Oromo militia, the Oromo Liberation Army, recently joined its forces with the TPLF on the highway leading toward Addis Ababa. The OLA's spokesman claimed that hundreds of Ethiopian soldiers have defected to their side in recent days, and that tens of thousands of Oromo youth have voluntarily joined their ranks. Neither claim was supported by evidence.

On Friday, nine militant groups including TPLF and OLA signed an alliance, claiming to represent a vision of Ethiopia more similar to that which prevailed under the TPLF, privileging ethnic autonomy and federalism, as opposed to Abiy's overtures toward centralizing power and creating a more unified Ethiopian identity.

Even as regional leaders such as Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta pleaded with the warring sides to stop fighting, and U.S. special envoy to the region Jeffrey Feltman held talks in Addis Ababa, neither the TPLF nor the government has publicly spoken in favor of a cease-fire.

	<p>The U.S. Embassy began authorizing nonessential diplomatic staff to leave the country, and numerous other missions began considering evacuation options. Feltman did not respond to a request for comment on Friday after meeting with Abiy and Ethiopia's defense and finance ministers.</p> <p>"We are preparing for the government to impose a total communications blackout," said one non-Ethiopian delegate at the African Union who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak with the press. "But we have no idea how we'll leave. Prices for flights have jumped to thousands of dollars. It makes me think about what happened in Kabul earlier this year."</p> <p>For Tigrayans who can't leave Addis, the TPLF's advance is only stoking more fear.</p> <p>"My family members are telling me, 'It doesn't take long to execute someone. The TPLF won't be able to save us,'" said Lemma. "So as they get close to Addis it is going to get worse — way worse."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Austria sharpens its' vaccine pass rules</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/austria-covid-restrictions.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/austria-covid-restrictions.html</a>
GIST	<p>Austria is tightening the rules of a national vaccine pass program starting Monday as it attempts to stem a coronavirus surge that has brought cases to levels unseen in almost a year.</p> <p>Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg announced the changes Friday night, telling reporters after a meeting with state governors: "It is simply our responsibility to protect the people of our country."</p> <p>Austrians will need proof of vaccination or a past infection to be seated at a restaurant, enter a bar, visit a hairdresser or join any gathering of more than 25 people. Up until now, documentation of a negative test was also accepted.</p> <p>The new federal rules match ones that the capital, Vienna, had planned to introduce a few days later, when it will also <a href="#">begin offering the Pfizer vaccine for children of ages 5 to 11</a>, pre-empting a decision by the European medical regulator.</p> <p>The country's national health agency reports <a href="#">522 coronavirus cases per 100,000 people</a> over the past week — a rate not seen since November of last year, when Austria was forced to go into a full lockdown. Hospitalizations remain below what they were then, however, with about half as many Covid patients in intensive care as during the peak in November 2020, <a href="#">according to health agency figures</a>.</p> <p>Around 63 percent of people in Austria are fully vaccinated — more than in the United States, but less than in most European Union countries, according to <a href="#">government figures collated by the Our World in Data project</a>.</p> <p>At the news conference in Vienna on Friday evening, Mr. Schallenberg tried once more to convince Austrians to take the shot.</p> <p>"With a vaccination we protect not only ourselves, but also our friends, family and colleagues," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Sierra Leone tanker truck explodes; kills 98</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/africa/tanker-truck-explodes-sierra-leone.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=World%20News">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/africa/tanker-truck-explodes-sierra-leone.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=World%20News</a>
GIST	<p>At least 98 people were killed when a tanker truck exploded on Friday night after a crash in the capital of Sierra Leone.</p> <p>Many of the victims were motorcycle riders and taxi drivers who had been trying to collect leaked fuel at the time of the blast, in the Wellington area of the capital, Freetown, according to an official from the</p>



country's disaster management agency. A witness to the explosion's aftermath said it had also killed people nearby outside buildings and in vehicles.

The death toll may rise, the official, Mohamed Lamrana Bah, said, because more people were taken to hospitals in critical condition, though he could not specify a number.

The West African country's president, Julius Maada Bio, [said on Twitter](#) that he was "deeply disturbed" by what had happened and promised government support for the families affected.

He and the mayor of Freetown, Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, cut short their trip to Glasgow for the [COP26 climate summit](#) and were on their way home on Saturday afternoon.

Sierra Leone's vice president, Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, asked those who had taken fuel to return it, in case it exploded in their homes.

The tanker truck is thought to have been attempting a U-turn about 10 p.m. when it collided with a truck carrying sand, Mr. Bah said. The tanker truck then began leaking fuel.

"Bike riders, taxi drivers and people around the neighborhood rushed to the scene to collect the leaking fuel, and in the process, the tanker exploded," he said in an interview on Saturday morning.

Mr. Bah, who is the communications director of Sierra Leone's National Disaster Management Agency, said that one house and the tires of the sand truck were still burning, and that his agency and others were trying to clear the area.

In one video of the aftermath, a man walked gingerly away from the site of the explosion, a few rags — all that was left of his clothes — hanging from his badly burned skin. He appeared to have been among those who tried to collect fuel.

"Satan called me. Let us pray. There is no other god but Allah. Let us pray," he repeated to himself as he walked.

In another video circulated on WhatsApp, survivors of the explosion lay on the floor, tried to sit up, or moved about groaning in a room of Freetown's King Harman Road Satellite Hospital. Staff members tended to them and handed out sachets of drinking water.

The explosion also set fire to a nearby gas station, Mr. Bah said.

A student who lives nearby said he had heard the blast and felt its heat in his home, and then rushed to the scene.

"We removed our shirts and wrapped our hands to lift bodies from the burning scene and took them to a safe place," said the student, Abdul Waheed Kamara, 26. "I personally rescued 16 people, the last of them was a woman. Me and another man helped her to a safe area. She was still alive but badly burnt."

He said he had counted more than 100 bodies, and that the fire service had arrived about 30 minutes after the explosion. There were no soldiers there, and police officers were standing well back from the fire, he said.

Among the dead, according to Mr. Kamara: a child wearing a backpack, people who were asleep in a nearby garage and parking lot, shopkeepers who tried to salvage their goods and got caught in the fire, and all the passengers of a minibus that was hit by the force of the explosion.

"I can still see the scene of the woman I rescued, and I can't get the images off my head," he said. "I won't be able to see that place the same again."

HEADLINE	11/06 Concert celebration then struggle for life
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/travis-scott-crowd-surge.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/travis-scott-crowd-surge.html</a>
GIST	<p>HOUSTON — Panic and then desperation spread through the crowd of 50,000 mostly young people just as the popular hometown rapper they had come to see, Travis Scott, took the stage Friday night. It came like a wave, an unstoppable movement of bodies that could not be held back.</p> <p>Some collapsed. Others fought for air. Concertgoers lifted up the unconscious bodies of friends and strangers and surfed them over the top of the crowd, hoping to send them to safety. Others shouted out for help with CPR and pleaded for the concert to stop.</p> <p>It kept going.</p> <p>In the end, eight people died, ranging in age from 14 to 27, according to city officials. Hundreds more were treated for injuries at a field hospital at the concert venue, the NRG Park in Houston, or at local hospitals. Among those treated at a hospital was a 10-year-old child.</p> <p>By Saturday, officials in Houston were at a loss to explain how the concert, part of the two-day Astroworld music festival organized by Live Nation and Mr. Scott, had transformed in an instant from a celebration to a struggle for life. So too were those who had been at the outdoor concert, who described a thrust of the crowd that would not let up as Mr. Scott took the stage around 9 p.m.</p> <p>“It was like hell,” said Nick Johnson, 17, who still had his concert bracelet on as he spoke on Saturday morning. “Everybody was just in the back, trying to rush to the front.”</p> <p>“People were literally grabbing and pinching at my body trying to get up from the ground,” said Chris Leigh, 23, adding that he lost contact with his friends as he tried to make it out of the crowd. “I was fighting for my life; there was no way out.”</p> <p>The event appeared to be one of the deadliest crowd-control disasters at a concert in the United States in many years. Similar episodes have occurred at venues around the world, during performances of all genres of music, including <a href="#">an electronic dance music festival Germany in 2010</a> at which 18 people were trapped and <a href="#">crushed</a>, and <a href="#">a 1979 Who concert in Cincinnati</a> where 11 people died as concertgoers rushed the entrance.</p> <p>But the deaths in Houston had a particularly devastating impact at a time when the rapture of live events was being felt following months of pandemic restrictions.</p> <p>“Young people with bright futures — those were the people who were at the event,” said Lina Hidalgo, the top executive for Harris County, which includes Houston.</p> <p>She and other officials at an afternoon news conference struggled to explain what had taken place the night before. “Perhaps the plans were inadequate, perhaps the plans were good but they weren’t followed, perhaps it was something else entirely,” she said, calling for an independent investigation.</p> <p>“There are a lot of unanswered questions,” Mayor Sylvester Turner said.</p> <p>Questions raised by concertgoers and local officials included whether there had been adequate security and medical personnel on hand for the event, and whether the concert could have been shut down sooner.</p> <p>Mr. Scott continued playing through his set of music, urging the crowd on at times, at other times pausing to acknowledge that something appeared to be wrong, including when an ambulance entered the crowd around 9:30 p.m.</p> <p>Live Nation stopped the concert roughly 30 minutes earlier than planned, around 10:10 p.m. — 40 minutes after city officials said the “mass casualty event” had begun.</p>

It was not clear how much of the chaos could be seen from the stage or when concert organizers became aware of a serious problem beyond the usual number of injuries that can take place at a large event. But the Houston police chief, Troy Finner, said that officials worried that cutting off the concert could make the situation worse.

“You cannot just close when you got 50,000 and over 50,000 individuals,” he said. “We have to worry about rioting, riots, when you have a group that’s that young.”

Investigators were looking into the circumstances of the surging crowd — studying the numerous videos recorded from inside the venue and talking to concertgoers — and into what had caused eight people to die, including whether drugs may have played a part.

One security officer appeared to have been pricked in the neck as he tried to restrain someone at the concert, Chief Finner said. The officer passed out but was revived using Narcan, which reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. “The medical staff did notice a prick that was similar to a prick that you would get if somebody was trying to inject,” he said.

Another element of the investigation, according to a county official, would be whether too many people had been in attendance. Earlier in the day, some had rushed the gate, and some people may have entered without tickets. At the news conference, officials said the concert venue had not been overcrowded.

“They could have had over 200,000 people in this venue; this venue was limited to 50,000,” said the Houston fire chief, Samuel Peña. He added that people did not appear to have trouble at the exits; most of the issues appeared to be in the crowd itself.

After crowd-control issues at the Astroworld festival in 2019, officials and concert organizers increased the security this year, Ms. Hidalgo said, with more than 500 event security staff members, 91 armed private security officers and 76 Houston Police Department officers on hand.

“We had more security over there than we had at the World Series games,” the mayor said.

In a video of the concert, which was later taken down, Mr. Scott could be heard telling the crowd: “I want to see some rages. Who want to rage?” Moments later he said, “There’s an ambulance in the crowd, whoa, whoa, whoa,” apparently trying to calm the commotion.

For several seconds, the music appeared to stop. Mr. Scott looked toward the crowd and appeared to ask what was happening.

Away from the stage, chaotic scenes were playing out.

Madeline Eskins, a 23-year-old intensive care nurse who was at the concert, said that she lost consciousness and her boyfriend carried her out of the crowd. She awoke in an area where the injured were being brought and noticed a man who looked dead.

“I told the security guard that I am an I.C.U. nurse, please let me look at him,” she said. The man did not have a pulse, Ms. Eskins said. “His eyes were rolled in back of his head, his pupils weren’t reacting,” she said. “Then another security guard overheard that I was a nurse and he said, ‘Can you come help us?’”

She said she was taken to an area where three people were laid on the ground, all receiving CPR. Some of the medical workers did not appear to know how to check a pulse or properly conduct chest compressions, she said. “They looked terrified,” she said.

In the afternoon news conference, officials said some of the injured had been trampled, and Chief Peña said that the third-party medical contractor for the event had become “quickly overwhelmed.” More than 60 city ambulances responded to the event, he said.

Sami Anjum, 28, served as a field medic for the Astroworld Music Festival. He said that concertgoers were “noncompliant” and made it hard to reach those in need. “Many bystanders offered to help or directed the field medics to take certain actions but they did not understand the volume, variety, velocity, and variability of the medical emergencies we were being faced with,” Mr. Anjum said in an email.

Extremely crowded conditions at a concert are not unheard of, and some at the concert said that they did not realize that anyone had been seriously injured or killed until after they got back home.

The most common cause of injury and death in crowds is compressive asphyxia, when people are pushed against one another so tightly that their airways become constricted, said Steve Adelman, a lawyer and the vice president of the Event Safety Alliance, an advocacy group. This happens most often during a “crowd crush,” when the audience is packed together so tightly that people cannot move, but it can also occur during a stampede.

Mr. Scott, in a statement, said that he was “absolutely devastated by what took place last night” and pledged to work with the investigation. A spokeswoman for Live Nation said the event organizers would “provide as much information and assistance as possible to the local authorities.”

Mr. Scott, who is from Houston, has deep roots in the city and connections to Mr. Turner, who said he had worked with Mr. Scott and his mother over the years. The mayor, who gave Mr. Scott a key to the city in 2019, has celebrated the musician’s career and his foundation’s work on behalf of underserved communities in Houston. “This is a tragic case, and that’s why I want a very, very thorough investigation of this,” he said.

Those who regularly attend large festival concerts — including previous Astroworld events — said something about the crowd behavior on Friday felt different.

“It was crazier than in 2019,” said Vanessa Johnson, 20, who also saw Mr. Scott perform that year, during which similar scenes, though less intense, had played out. “I’ve been to a lot of festivals and people always pass out.”

A [26-second video posted on Reddit](#) showed one person climbing up onto a riser from which a cameraman was recording the concert, and calling for the performance to stop, shouting that people were dying. Other people could be heard insulting him and telling him to “calm down.”

In the separate video of the concert, Mr. Scott could be heard saying, “If everybody good, put a middle finger up to the sky.” The video showed the ambulance in the crowd, surrounded by people holding their phones, many with a middle finger extended.

Then, two men who appeared to be part of Mr. Scott’s entourage approached him on the stage. He shoed them away and turned to the crowd, asking those present to put “two hands to the sky.”

The video showed the performer raising his hands in the air.

“Y’all know what you came to do,” Mr. Scott said to the crowd. Then, as the music resumed, he urged the crowd to make the “ground shake.”

The concert, which continued for about another 30 minutes, ended with Mr. Scott waving to the crowd and jogging offstage as he said: “I love y’all. Make it home safe. Good night!”

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HEADLINE	11/06 Cop26 protesters back wide array of causes
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/europe/cop-climate-protests.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/europe/cop-climate-protests.html</a>

GLASGOW — Defying biting wind and steady rain, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets of Glasgow on Saturday in noisy and colorful protests, calling on global leaders to take action drastic enough to match the scale of a climate crisis already wreaking havoc on parts of the globe.

Waving banners, beating drums and chanting, an array of demonstrators — including members of trade unions and faith organizations, as well as left-wing groups — took over large parts of the Scottish city, which is hosting the [COP26 climate summit](#). By midafternoon, a long, winding line of protesters was making its way through the city, and by late afternoon they were still streaming into Glasgow Green, a city park, to hear speeches from activists.

The protest illustrated how the battle to curb climate change had become an umbrella for a growing protest movement that aims to put global leaders under pressure for a broad range of causes, including racial justice and income equality.

“We should not underestimate the significance of how the climate movement has broken through into the mainstream in the last two years because it’s really starting to change people’s consciousness,” said Feyzi Ismail, a lecturer in global policy and activism at Goldsmiths, University of London.

“I think it is more important than what’s going on inside the COP meeting because it’s applying the kind of pressure that’s needed to force governments to act, but also to take far more radical positions than they might have,” she added.

The police did not provide an estimate for the size of the crowd. Organizers said that more than 100,000 people took part, and while that was not possible to verify independently, the gathering was sprawling and extensive; at one point the procession took more than an hour to pass a fixed location.

Many of the protesters said they were motivated by a connection to their own lives.

“Flooding is happening, and it is going to keep happening,” said Alexandra Bryden, 63, an upholsterer and curtain maker from Auchterarder, north of Edinburgh, who said that her workshop had been flooded and that she worried about the future of her family members who live by the coast.

According to some organizers, more than 200 events were planned around the world, with more than half of that number in Britain. In London thousands marched from the Bank of England to Trafalgar Square, and there were protests in other British cities including Birmingham and Bristol.

In Paris, hundreds of demonstrators gathered in front of City Hall, where activists held up portraits of world leaders they accused of doing too little to curb global warming. The leaders’ names, including President Biden and President Emmanuel Macron of France, were read out and then booed by the crowd.

But the focus on Saturday was in Glasgow, where authorities closed off several dozen streets to manage the protests.

“People are coming out in this weather to say we have had enough of this,” said Robert Dickie, 64, a retired accountant from Hamilton, Scotland, near Glasgow, wearing a kilt and speaking after playing the bagpipes.

“Things have got to change before we all become extinct — and that is what is going to happen in the long term,” he said.

By mid afternoon, the storms had lifted, a rainbow appeared briefly, and helicopters hovered overhead. A massive crowd cheered as a number of Indigenous activists from the Americas took the stage and demanded that world leaders prioritize the protections of their ancestral lands.

In Glasgow there was some confrontation with police, who said they removed protesters who blocked a bridge and were “containing” another group “following an escalation in their conduct.”

But despite the poor weather there was an uplifting mood for the most part at Saturday's march, which was the culmination of smaller protests that took place during the week around the city. They included [a substantial youth-led demonstration on Friday](#) organized by the group Fridays for Future, an international movement that grew out of Greta Thunberg's solo school strike in 2018. She addressed the crowd on Friday and described COP26 as "a failure."

The first week of the climate summit saw new pledges to tackle deforestation and to move away from coal. At least 105 countries [signed an agreement](#) to reduce emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, by 30 percent this decade. Major financial institutions said they would mobilize trillions of dollars to help shift the global economy toward cleaner energy.

Still, experts say that, to avert the worst effects of climate change, temperature rise needs to be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, between preindustrial times and the end of this century. And that goal is not within reach even if all countries fulfill their current pledges.

Like many environmental groups, protesters in Glasgow were skeptical of pledges, doubting that such promises would be delivered and arguing that, in any case, they did not go far enough to solve an urgent global problem.

"There are going to be communities on the Scottish coast that will be cut off. It is real," said Ms. Bryden, the upholsterer. "I can't look my grandson in the eye. I am sorry about what he is going to have to put up with in the future."

Bel Burn, 59, a retired health worker from Cumbria, in northern England, said she was protesting because she opposed intensive agriculture and described how she had bought 20 acres of land, on which she planned to plant 4,200 trees.

"They haven't gone far enough," she said referring to global leaders. "They have agreed a lot of this stuff before, why would we believe it's going to be different this time?"

Stuart Graham, a Glasgow trade union official and a member of the COP26 Coalition that organized the protests, said he hoped the march would bolster campaigns for free public transportation and for a huge program to insulate and improve the city's housing stock. "It's critical that we have a civil society with a powerful voice to hold these leaders to account," he said.

Organizers argue that the bewildering range of groups with different agendas are united by a common commitment to what they call climate justice.

Katia Penha, one of the activists, who is also part of the Quilombola community, a group of Black rural residents in Brazil, said her community has been affected by mining and wants its challenges to be acknowledged alongside Indigenous communities that are disproportionately affected.

"We came here to tell the world: Without us — the Quilombola's people in Brazil — it's not possible to have debate about climate change," she said, pointing out how a [burst hydroelectric dam in 2015 in Mariana, Brazil, killed](#) Quilombola people and wiped out communities.

Elsewhere, vegan activists carried balloons of a cow and a chicken with the message, "Thank you for not eating us." On a hillside, a group spelled out "Amazonia Forever" with strips of cloth above the image of a butterfly, calling attention to the destruction of the rainforest.

Ms. Ismail, the Goldsmiths lecturer, said that the question for the protest movement was whether it could extend its influence by combining with trade unions and persuading workers to use the threat of strikes to push forward a coherent agenda. But she said it had made strides already.

	“The protest movement is the only thing that is going to change the situation,” Ms. Ismail said. “If there is no pressure, there will be no change.”
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 US summit delegate tests positive; more?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/06/world/covid-booster-vaccine#cop26-covid-positive">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/06/world/covid-booster-vaccine#cop26-covid-positive</a>
GIST	<p>GLASGOW — In a gathering with more than 20,000 people from nearly every country in the world, one of the biggest major international summits since the pandemic began, a Covid outbreak was always going to be a danger.</p> <p>So far, organizers have not revealed the number of positive coronavirus test results. But on Saturday, the State Department confirmed that a member of the United States delegation had tested positive. Earlier, Mayor Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles tested positive days after arriving in Scotland.</p> <p>The State Department statement on Saturday declined to identify the person but said the official had been fully vaccinated and was quarantining. The statement also said John Kerry, the U.S. presidential envoy for climate change who is leading the negotiations at the summit, had received several negative coronavirus results, including daily lateral flow tests and a P.C.R. test, since the delegate tested positive.</p> <p>Asked this week about the number of positive tests at the conference, Alok Sharma, the British president of the talks, said the numbers were lower than in the rest of Scotland. “At this point, we’re comfortable where we are,” he said.</p> <p>Still, delegates expressed concern.</p> <p>“You are being exposed to more Covid than you would want,” said Marcelo Mena Carrasco, a scientist and former environment minister of Chile.</p> <p>At the venue, the percentage of people wearing high-quality, certified masks indoors is low, he said. Air circulation in the meetings rooms was so poor that when he measured it with an air quality monitor, levels were much higher than is recommended for indoor settings.</p> <p>“This is supposed to be the COP based on science, and we’re supposed to be the ones who are basing decisions on science,” he said, “and this has shown that even the most basic things we’ve been hearing over the past two years haven’t really come through.”</p> <p>The conference comes at a time when coronavirus cases in Britain are high. When asked about incidences of Covid-19 at COP26, a spokesman for Police Scotland also said the force would not be making numbers public.</p> <p>On Tuesday, a National Security Council aide who had traveled abroad with Mr. Biden’s delegation tested positive in Scotland and entered quarantine, a White House official said. The aide, who had not been in close contact with Mr. Biden, tested positive on Tuesday with a rapid test but later tested negative through a P.C.R. test, and was no longer in quarantine as of Saturday, the official added.</p> <p>The United Nations has put in place rules to limit the virus’s spread. All attendees are required to take a coronavirus test, although the system is based on the honor code, since results are self-reported. Masks are required almost everywhere, and there are limits on the numbers of people allowed to gather in meeting rooms.</p> <p>But inside the venue, social distancing is limited or nonexistent, and many attendees have their masks lowered. There are lines for food, bathrooms and crowds of people in the conference venue halls.</p> <p>John Swinney, Scotland’s deputy first minister, said this week that a rise in cases in Scotland was “very unsettling” and warned of a possible increase as a result of the climate summit.</p>



HEADLINE	<b>11/06 India hospital coronavirus ICU fire kills 11</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/06/world/covid-booster-vaccine#india-fire-covid-icu">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/06/world/covid-booster-vaccine#india-fire-covid-icu</a>
GIST	<p>NEW DELHI — Eleven people died after a fire broke out in a coronavirus intensive care unit in the western state of Maharashtra, the latest in a series of fatal disasters in Covid-19 wards in India.</p> <p>Hospital staff tried to douse the fire that started Saturday morning with fire extinguishers, but the flames spread quickly in the airtight room, cutting the power out and forcing people to flee to safety, said Shankar Misal, the fire chief in the Ahmednagar district.</p> <p>“It created huge, black smoke inside. It was completely dark,” he said.</p> <p>Within minutes, firefighters had shattered windowpanes and lifted out 15 patients from the 17-bed facility. Most of the 11 patients who died suffocated from smoke, Mr. Misal said. The survivors’ medical condition was not immediately known.</p> <p>The fire department is investigating whether an electrical short circuit caused the blaze. The Covid-19 ward was among many built hastily across India to accommodate a deluge of patients through the pandemic.</p> <p>India’s infection curve is down sharply from the peak of its second wave in June, but the country is still reporting about 13,000 new cases daily.</p> <p>Maharashtra’s top elected official, the chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, wrote on Twitter to express his “deep anguish over the incident.”</p> <p>India’s health system — fragile and underfunded even in normal times — has experienced enormous strain during waves of the pandemic. In June, hospitals in the capital, New Delhi, and the state capital of Maharashtra, Mumbai, ran out of beds, medical oxygen and staff, and turned away patients who died outside the gates.</p> <p>The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ramped up the country’s health care infrastructure, but health is managed at a state level in India, and the standard of care and conditions at hospitals vary greatly from one region to the next.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Court blocks vaccine mandate for now</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/06/world/covid-booster-vaccine#biden-osh-vaccine-mandate-blocked">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/06/world/covid-booster-vaccine#biden-osh-vaccine-mandate-blocked</a>
GIST	<p>A federal appeals panel on Saturday temporarily blocked a new coronavirus vaccine mandate for large businesses, in a sign that the Biden administration may face an uphill battle in its biggest effort yet to combat the virus among the American work force.</p> <p>The stay, issued by a three-judge panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in Louisiana, doesn’t have an immediate impact. The first major deadline in the new rule is Dec. 5, when companies with at least 100 employees must require unvaccinated employees to wear masks indoors. Businesses have until Jan. 4 to <a href="#">mandate Covid vaccinations</a> or start weekly testing of their workers.</p> <p>But Saturday’s move provided momentum for a wide coalition of opponents of the rule, who have argued that it is unconstitutional. A group of businesses, religious groups, advocacy organizations and several states, including Louisiana and Texas, had filed a petition on Friday with the court, arguing that the administration had overstepped its authority.</p> <p>It was unclear whether the stay would be a procedural blip for the Biden administration or the first step in the unwinding of the mandate.</p>

At the core of the legal challenge is the question of whether OSHA exceeded its authority in issuing the rule and whether such a mandate would need to be passed by Congress. A similar issue was in play when a Texas court in late 2016 [halted an Obama-era Labor Department rule](#) that would have made millions more Americans eligible for overtime pay. The Trump administration, which took office the next year, said it would not defend the overtime rule.

The suit against the mandate stated that President Biden “set the legislative policy” of substantially increasing the number of Americans covered by vaccination requirements, and “then set binding rules enforced with the threat of large fines.”

“That is a quintessential legislative act — and one wholly unrelated to the purpose of OSHA itself, which is protecting workplace safety,” the suit said. “Nowhere in OSHA’s enabling legislation does Congress confer upon it the power to end pandemics.”

A separate lawsuit against the new rule was also filed on Friday in the Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in St. Louis by [11 Republican-led states](#), among them Texas, Mississippi, South Carolina and Utah.

The Fifth Circuit panel said in a brief order, signed by a deputy clerk, that the judges were blocking the regulation “because the petitions give cause to believe there are grave statutory and constitutional issues with the mandate.” It said the rule was suspended “pending further action by this court.”

The two-page order directed the Biden administration to respond by 5 p.m. Monday to the group’s request for a permanent injunction.

Seema Nanda, the chief legal officer for the Department of Labor, said in a statement that the government was confident in its legal authority to issue the mandate on vaccinations and testing.

“The Occupational Safety and Health Act explicitly gives OSHA the authority to act quickly in an emergency where the agency finds that workers are subjected to a grave danger and a new standard is necessary to protect them,” Ms. Nanda said.

“We are fully prepared to defend this standard in court,” she added.

After both sides have filed briefs, the court will decide whether to lift the temporary injunction, allowing the rule to proceed as planned, or whether to grant a permanent injunction. OSHA could then take the case to the Supreme Court.

“The side that is asking for the injunction has to prove that this rule violates the Constitution,” said Mark F. Kluger, founding partner at the employment law firm Kluger Healey. “That’s a really tough burden to meet,” he added, noting that “federal agencies over the years have become increasingly aggressive about passing or creating rules.”

As an example, he cited the National Labor Relations Board’s rules for union elections. But not all such efforts have been upheld by the courts.

“The fight is not over and I will never stop resisting this Admin’s unconstitutional overreach!” Attorney General Ken Paxton of Texas, who had challenged the mandate, [said in a tweet](#) on Saturday.

Mr. Paxton has [previously called](#) the Biden administration’s mandate a “breathtaking abuse of federal power” and is one of the attorneys general who has sued the [administration over federal worker vaccine mandates](#).

The Louisiana attorney general, Jeff Landry, [said in a tweet that the court’s decision](#) was a “major win for the liberty of job creators and their employees.” Attorney General Alan Wilson of South Carolina also

	<p>applauded the court’s decision on Twitter. “The Constitution will prevail,” he <a href="#">wrote</a>. “The President is not above the law.”</p> <p>But David Michaels, a leader of OSHA during the Obama administration, described the court’s move on Saturday as a faulty ruling with political motivations. “The same activist court that refused to stay Texas’ law that permits bounty hunters to sue anyone who aids an abortion after six weeks of pregnancy has stayed an OSHA rule that is clearly within OSHA’s authority, will save lives and make workplaces safe.”</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/06 Sudan activists reject army power-share</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sudan-activists-reject-power-sharing-call-strikes-81006866">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sudan-activists-reject-power-sharing-call-strikes-81006866</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>KHARTOUM, Sudan -- Sudan’s protest movement has rejected internationally backed initiatives to return to a power-sharing arrangement with the military after last month’s coup, announcing two days of nationwide strikes starting Sunday.</p> <p>The movement called for the establishment of a civilian government to lead a transition to democracy.</p> <p>The call came as a leader of the country’s main political party accused the military leadership of negotiating in bad faith.</p> <p>The Sudanese military seized power Oct. 25, dissolving the transitional administration and arresting dozens of government officials and politicians. The coup has been met with international outcry and massive protests in the streets of Khartoum and elsewhere in the country.</p> <p>The takeover has upended the country’s fragile planned transition to democratic rule, more than two years after a popular uprising forced the removal of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government.</p> <p>Since the coup, the international community has accelerated mediation efforts to find a way out of the crisis, which threatens to further destabilize the already restive Horn of Africa region.</p> <p>The Sudanese Professionals’ Association, which led the uprising against al-Bashir, said late Friday that mediation initiatives which “seek a new settlement” between the military and civilian leaders would “reproduce and worsen” the country’s crisis.</p> <p>The association vowed to continue protesting until a full civilian government is established to lead the transition.</p> <p>Under the slogan of: “No negotiations, no compromise, no power-sharing,” the association, which has a presence across the country, called for strikes and civil disobedience Sunday and Monday.</p> <p>Al-Wathig al-Berier, the secretary general of the Umma party, urged the international community Friday to pressure the military to de-escalate. Since the coup, the generals have continued to dismantle the transitional government and arrest pro-democracy leaders. The Umma is Sudan’s largest political party and has ministers in the now-deposed government.</p> <p>“We truly need to prepare the atmosphere and de-escalate matters so that we can sit at the table,” al-Berier told The Associated Press. “But clearly the military faction is continuing with its plan and there are no efforts to show good will.”</p> <p>He was referring to Thursday’s arrest of leaders from the Forces for Freedom and Change, a coalition that was born out of the 2019 protest movement. The military detained three leaders of the movement after they met with U.N. officials Thursday in Khartoum. The meeting was part of U.N.-led mediation efforts.</p>

	<p>Al-Berier said the mediation efforts have yet to produce results, blaming the military for that failure. He warned of possible bloodshed since the military and the protest movement have become increasingly entrenched in their positions.</p> <p>He urged the international community to increase pressure on the military leaders to reverse the coup.</p> <p>“In these initial stages, we hope that they continue strong pressure. This pressure has to be more than just tweets. This pressure needs to have mechanisms that could create real pressure on military component,” he said.</p> <p>In other developments, the board of deans of Khartoum University officially suspended classes indefinitely after security forces stormed the university grounds on Oct. 25, the day of the coup, and beat and insulted students and professors. The classes had already stopped since the coup.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Colorism: discrimination among Hispanics</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/colorism-study-highlights-discrimination-based-skin-color-hispanics/story?id=80991400">https://abcnews.go.com/US/colorism-study-highlights-discrimination-based-skin-color-hispanics/story?id=80991400</a>
GIST	<p>Hispanics with darker skin report more discrimination and less access to opportunities than those with lighter complexions, according to <a href="#">a new Pew Research Center study</a>.</p> <p>Pew's National Survey of <a href="#">Latinos</a> -- a bilingual, national survey of 3,375 Hispanic U.S. adults conducted in March -- highlights colorism, which experts and researchers have said is one of many ways people with lighter skin continue to enjoy unfair advantages.</p> <p>Though colorism and racism often are connected, they're not the same thing, experts said. Racism is prejudice against people of a certain racial or ethnic group, while colorism affects the degree to which people experience discrimination. Those discriminating against others may even be in the same racial or ethnic group.</p> <p>"They're both of the same [race or ethnicity], but their skin color differs, and people may have different perceptions of them as a result of skin tone," said Trina Jones, a <a href="#">professor of law at Duke University</a>.</p> <p>Historically, those who are closer to "whiteness" -- the more western European phenotypes one possesses - - the more likely that individual is to be privileged while also less likely to be discriminated against, Jones explained.</p> <p>"If you have societal structures that embed notions of white racial supremacy, then anything that will approximate that idealized norm ... is going to be deemed to be more valuable," Jones said. "And the more you get away from that, the more difficulty people will encounter. So, the darker your skin tones, the curlier or kinky your hair, the less access."</p> <p>Pew found that 62% of Hispanic adults said having darker skin hurts Hispanics' ability to get ahead in the United States "at least a little," while 59% said having lighter skin helps them get ahead.</p> <p>About 57% of Hispanics in the survey said their skin color shapes their daily life experiences "a lot or some," and 64% of Hispanics with darker skin said they personally experienced discrimination during the year previous to the survey, while only 54% of Hispanics with lighter skin color said the same.</p> <p>Hispanics with darker skin tones were more likely to have been treated as if they were less smart, treated unfairly, criticized for speaking Spanish or called offensive names, the Pew study found.</p> <p>Such discrimination has very real effects on educational opportunities, career paths and options for health care, according to Nayeli Y. Chavez-Dueñas, a <a href="#">clinical psychologist and educator at The Chicago School</a></p>

[of Professional Psychology](#). Hollywood and the media also have been criticized recently for a lack of representation of dark-skinned characters, including [a recent production of "In the Heights."](#)

"It really encompasses everything -- it has a negative effect on every indicator of physical health, mental health, but also access," said Chavez-Dueñas.

A 2021 study in [the Journal of Health and Social Behavior](#) found that colorism is significantly associated with worse physical health outcomes. Pew researchers found that individuals with darker skin also achieved lower levels of educational attainment and had less access to health care.

Around the world, skin color has long been associated with social status. In Latin America, Chavez-Dueñas said, a hierarchical social system tied one's worth to their skin color and physical features.

"The way that we were socialized is to prefer and consider people that are lighter-skinned to be more beautiful, to be more attractive," Chavez-Dueñas explained.

Colorism in the Americas goes back to early colonialism and the belief among colonizers that the inherited look of enslaved Black people or Indigenous persons made them less worthy of opportunities or wealth. But it's an issue seen all over the globe -- in Asian countries like India, Jones points out, the sale of skin-bleaching treatments remains popular.

"In the Americas, as you have this mixed-race population being produced in a racialized context, having lighter skin tones and having access to white privilege had benefits associated with it," Jones said. "These benefits were passed intergenerationally over time."

This idealized value of "whiteness," Chavez-Dueñas and Jones said, persists today and is a big reason systemic failings affecting dark-skinned Black and brown people haven't been eradicated.

"Everyone needs to be aware of the ways," Jones said, "in which it consciously and subconsciously influences their behaviors and choices."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Study: pets can catch Covid variant</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/5/pets-can-catch-coronavirus-variant-develop-severe-/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/5/pets-can-catch-coronavirus-variant-develop-severe-/</a>
GIST	<p>Pets can catch variants of the coronavirus from humans and become seriously ill, new research shows.</p> <p>Four cats and two dogs fell ill with the highly contagious alpha variant, also known as the B.1.17 variant, and then developed heart problems, a study published in the journal Veterinary Record found.</p> <p>Two pet cats and one dog tested positive for the disease in a PCR test. Two other cats and one dog developed coronavirus antibodies two to six weeks after experiencing symptoms of cardiac disease, according to the study published Thursday.</p> <p>Most of the pets' owners had experienced respiratory symptoms for weeks before their cats and dogs fell ill and tested positive for COVID-19 themselves. All of the pets were referred for acute onset of cardiac disease including myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart muscle.</p> <p>The study highlights the risk that pets can be infected with the coronavirus, lead author Dr. Luca Ferasin, of the Ralph Veterinary Referral Centre in the United Kingdom, told Science Daily.</p> <p>"We also reported the atypical clinical manifestations characterized by severe heart abnormalities, which is a well-recognized complication in people affected by COVID-19 but has never [been] described in pets before," he said.</p>

	<p>Dr. Ferasin added that COVID-19 infection in pets seems relatively rare and that it appears that humans are spreading the virus to pets rather than the reverse.</p> <p>While pets can catch the coronavirus, it is not clear if the alpha variant is able to more easily infect particular animal species or increase the chances of human-to-animal spread, the researchers noted.</p> <p>Earlier evidence shows that coronavirus variants can infect pet dogs and cats as well as mice.</p> <p>Veterinarians in Texas and the UK in March reported infections of the alpha variant in dogs and cats.</p> <p>Meanwhile, French researchers have discovered that the B.1.351 variant from South Africa and the P.1 variant from Brazil can infect lab mice, raising questions about whether mice and other rodents living close to humans can become “secondary reservoirs” for the coronavirus with potential spillback to people.</p> <p>There also have been reports of COVID-19 infections in ferrets, zoo animals including otters and several types of big cats, farmed mink, and wild white-tailed deer in several U.S. states, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>“At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, to people. More studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by SARS-CoV-2,” the CDC says on its website. “Some coronaviruses that infect animals can be spread to people and then spread between people, but this is rare.”</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/05 Iran-backed militias clash w/Iraq forces</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iran-backed-militias-clash-baghdad/2021/11/05/30e15cf2-3e3b-11ec-bd6f-da376f47304e_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iran-backed-militias-clash-baghdad/2021/11/05/30e15cf2-3e3b-11ec-bd6f-da376f47304e_story.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>BAGHDAD — Supporters of Iran-backed militias clashed Friday with Iraqi security forces outside the fortified Green Zone complex as tensions spiked over the results of national elections last month.</p> <p>At least 125 people were injured, according to Iraq’s Health Ministry. Kataib Hezbollah, one of the most powerful militias, said three people had been killed.</p> <p>Iran-backed groups have been demanding a recount of the Oct. 10 parliamentary election results, which saw Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr’s party secure the most seats even though the influential Fatah alliance of Iran-linked parties won more votes. The discrepancy appears to be the result of a superior electoral strategy on the part of Sadr’s party.</p> <p>After the Fatah alliance saw its seats in parliament cut by about two-thirds, militia supporters began camping outside the gated Green Zone, which is home to government offices and foreign embassies. For several weeks, the protesters have rotated shifts inside tents on the sidewalk or sitting outside under banners that denounce Iraq’s election as fraudulent.</p> <p>On Thursday, the alliance decided to escalate, urging supporters to storm the Green Zone and calling the demonstration Friday their “last chance.” When they arrived at two separate gates, security forces opened fire at protesters.</p> <p>The protesters, however, did not disperse. By late afternoon in an area to the south of the Green Zone, young men were pounding sections of the sidewalk into pieces, before hurling them at security forces. “Why are you just standing there?” one of the men called to others gathered. “Come and stone them with us!”</p> <p>When asked by a reporter why protesters had not dispersed outside the Green Zone as security forces tried to push them back, militia representatives said they had received orders for their cadres to stay put.</p>



	<p>The Health Ministry said almost 100 of those treated for injuries were from the security forces.</p> <p>“We follow with great anger the hideous state of repression with which the government authorities deal with peaceful demonstrators,” said Hadi al-Amiri, leader of the Fatah alliance.</p> <p>Qais al-Khazali, leader of the Iran-linked Asaib Ahl al-Haq group, condemned the violence and urged justice for the wounded demonstrators. “Whoever they were, they must be held accountable,” he said, referring to the security forces.</p> <p>Iraq’s military said Friday that Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi had ordered an investigation into the violence.</p> <p>The escalation came as Sadr and his representatives met in Baghdad with leaders of Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish parties, raising the prospect that he would move ahead with the formation of a government that would marginalize Iran-linked factions.</p> <p>Foreign observers have broadly endorsed the results of Iraq’s October election, saying it proceeded “smoothly” and with significantly less fraud on voting day than in previous years. But the vote was marred by one of the <a href="#">lowest turnouts in the country’s history</a>, reflecting widespread apathy and disillusionment over corruption and a lack of accountability.</p> <p>The country’s electoral commission began a partial manual recount of the vote last week, saying that, so far, initial results have stayed the same.</p> <p>Iran’s influence is marbled throughout Iraq’s economy and political system, and Tehran backs a network of powerful armed groups that make its authority clear in the corridors of power and out on the streets.</p> <p>Human rights groups say Iran and Sadr-linked militias have assassinated dozens of their critics in recent years, sending ripples of fear through an anti-government protest movement that toppled Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi two years ago this month.</p> <p>As night fell Friday, the violence had largely died down, but several hundred protesters remained out on the streets. Eyeing them warily, a commander in the security forces said he was worried.</p> <p>“They are mobilizing,” he said. “We are afraid they might bring their weapons.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Shortages stunt German economic growth</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/europe/shortages-german-economic-growth.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/europe/shortages-german-economic-growth.html</a>
GIST	<p>Persistent shortages are dragging down the German economy, Europe’s largest, as companies struggle to fill orders because the necessary parts or raw materials are not arriving from abroad.</p> <p>Surveys and data released this week indicate that the ongoing <a href="#">crunch in the supply chain</a> is the main factor slowing Germany’s manufacturing powerhouse, causing the government to scale back its forecast for economic growth for 2021. Many economists are now predicting that the situation won’t improve until well into 2022.</p> <p>Industrial production shrank by 1.1 percent in September compared with the previous month, according to <a href="#">data</a> released on Friday by the Federal Statistics Office. The drop was led by a fall in the production of mechanical, electrical and data processing equipment.</p> <p>More than 90 percent of all manufacturers in the automobile and electrical equipment industries said that their production had been hampered by a lack of supplies, according to a <a href="#">survey</a> released Wednesday by the Ifo Institute. Some economists are predicting the shortages could result in <a href="#">a “bottleneck recession.”</a></p>



And last month the German government cut its projection for economic growth for the year to 2.6 percent, down from a 3.5 percent estimate in April, citing supply chain issues and rising energy prices.

“There will not be the final spurt we had hoped for,” said Peter Altmaier, the minister of economy in Chancellor Angela Merkel’s caretaker government.

But the government predicted the economy would gain momentum in 2022, and lifted its estimate for next year’s growth to 4.1 percent from 3.6 percent, reflecting more shipments of microchips and raw materials.

That projection reflects the expectation that a backlog of orders will be able to be filled in the coming months. Data released on Thursday showed industrial orders rebounding less than expected at an increase of 1.1 percent in September, after an unexpectedly large drop in August.

Given the demand, some economists believe that with an increase in shipping predicted for the first part of next year, the German economy is positioned to improve, although it will not be immediate.

“There is a potential for an upside,” said Carsten Brzeski, an economic analyst with ING Bank. “Only a small improvement in industrial production is required to see positive growth.”

One of the biggest threats, however, remains the coronavirus pandemic.

Germany finds itself facing a fourth wave of infections, with [a record](#) number of new infections, 33,949, recorded in a 24-hour period on Thursday. That could prevent people from going out shopping or dining, endangering a projected increase in private consumption that has proved one of the bright spots in the German economy, and hitting the country just as the holiday period arrives, a high point for consumer spending.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Activist: world leaders profit off system</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/europe/cop26-greta-thunberg.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/europe/cop26-greta-thunberg.html</a>
GIST	<p>Greta Thunberg, the 18-year-old Swedish climate activist whose school strike inspired young people the world over to take action on climate change, criticized world leaders on Friday for allowing the “exploitation of people and nature.”</p> <p>“The leaders are not doing nothing,” Ms. Thunberg said, addressing a crowd of thousands marching in Glasgow outside the United Nations climate summit. “They are actively creating loopholes, shaping frameworks to benefit themselves to continue profiting from this destructive system.”</p> <p>One of the most recognizable climate activists in the world, Ms. Thunberg has painted a gloomy portrait of the summit in Glasgow, where officials from around the world are trying to reach agreements to reduce emissions and keep the average global temperature from rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius compared with preindustrial levels by the end of this century.</p> <p>Speaking on the sidelines of the summit on Thursday, Ms. Thunberg said that COP26 was “sort of turning into a greenwash campaign, a P.R. campaign,” for business leaders and politicians to pretend that they are taking action on global warming without following through.</p> <p>“Since we are so far from what actually we needed,” Ms. Thunberg <a href="#">said at a New York Times event in Glasgow</a>, “I think what would be considered a success would be if people realize what a failure this COP is.”</p> <p>Leaders and business executives have made some significant commitments. On Tuesday, more than 100 countries agreed to cut emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, 30 percent by 2030. And on Wednesday a coalition of the world’s biggest investors, banks and insurers that collectively control \$130</p>

	trillion said they were committed to <a href="#">financing projects</a> that would help get companies and countries to net-zero emissions by 2050.
	But environmentalists have criticized the financing pledge as lacking in detail.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 India's moral high ground erodes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/asia/india-region-muslim-hindu-strife.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/asia/india-region-muslim-hindu-strife.html</a>
GIST	<p>NEW DELHI — The mob rampaged for days, burning homes, breaking into temples and clashing with police, leaving several dead.</p> <p>The victims were <a href="#">minority Hindus living in Bangladesh</a>, a majority-Muslim nation grappling with increasing extremism, and the violence drew an outcry from politicians in neighboring India. As the region's traditional center of gravity, India has a history of promoting tolerance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also positioned himself as the champion of Hindus against a history of victimhood.</p> <p>But the <a href="#">erosion of human rights</a> in India has weakened its moral high ground in a region where ethnic and sectarian tensions are worsening. Sheikh Hasina — Bangladesh's prime minister and a close ally, who had just sent Mr. Modi 71 red roses on his birthday — had pointed words for India, even as she promised to hunt the culprits.</p> <p>"We expect that nothing happens there," Ms. Hasina said, "which could influence any situation in Bangladesh affecting our Hindu community here."</p> <p>India is losing leverage in South Asia as its government tries to reshape the country <a href="#">into a Hindu state</a>. In <a href="#">marginalizing</a> and <a href="#">maligning</a> its minority Muslims at home, Mr. Modi's government has weakened India's traditional leadership role of encouraging harmony in a region of many fault lines.</p> <p>The shift could also open opportunities for China, which has used the promise of investment and access to its hard-charging economy to cultivate stronger relations with its rival's neighbors.</p> <p>"The openly partisan approach to communal issues has created a very peculiar situation for us as far as that moral high ground in neighborhood policy is concerned," said Yashwant Sinha, who was India's foreign minister when Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party was last in power in the early 2000s. "We can't say 'you stop it, this should not happen,' because we ourselves are guilty of it."</p> <p>Leaders of the ruling party declined to comment. In public statements, officials have pointed to Mr. Modi's "neighborhood first" focus in foreign policy, something he announced soon after taking office in 2014. They say the Indian leader is deeply invested in improving regional connections "that bear <a href="#">prosperity to the neighborhood</a>."</p> <p>Calls for tolerance in the region are increasingly needed.</p> <p>In Sri Lanka, a Buddhist-majority country, the government has been taking a tougher stance toward the Tamil, a largely Hindu minority whose grievances led to a three-decade civil war, and toward its small Muslim population. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa recently appointed a hard-line Buddhist monk to lead an overhaul of the legal system, though he has been accused of stirring hatred against Muslims and jailed for intimidating the wife of a journalist who had disappeared. The panel overseeing the overhaul effort includes Muslim scholars but has no Tamil representation.</p> <p>In majority-Muslim Pakistan, where the ethnic Pashtuns and Baloch have long been marginalized, increasing Islamist extremism has resulted in vigilante action against the Hindu minority, who make up just 2 percent of the population. They have faced repeated episodes of violence, vandalism of their temples, occupation of their land and an increase in forced conversion of minority girls, according to</p>

Pakistan's human rights commission. Prime Minister Imran Khan has spoken out against the abuses, but to little effect.

Communal violence in one country often becomes fodder for the narrow nationalism of the other. Mr. Khan has blamed Mr. Modi for “unleashing a reign of fear and violence against India's 200 million-strong Muslim community.” Mr. Modi's supporters frequently splash videos of the anti-Hindu violence in Pakistan and elsewhere in the region as justification for policies [seen as discriminating](#) against Muslims. But such violence and the abuse of minorities is nothing new in South Asia, a region of deep ethnic and religious fault lines that is home to a quarter of the world's population.

The traumatic partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, and the later war-driven split of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971, left sizable ethnic and religious minorities in each country. The domestic policies of one nation inevitably affect the population of another.

Traditionally, how India — the largest and the most diverse of the nations — tried to manage its affairs set the tone for the rest. Even when sectarian violence flared within its own borders, India was the big brother with larger-than-life leaders like Gandhi and its legacy of ending centuries of colonial rule through nonviolence.

The policies of Mr. Modi's party have chipped away at that position, not unlike the erosion of the United States' global standing on human rights during the Trump administration. His Bharatiya Janata Party has pursued a Hindu-first agenda that has often put the country's Muslims at a disadvantage. The party has also refused to rein in hard-line elements within its ranks, sometimes leading to violence.

Ms. Hasina, Bangladesh's prime minister, and others have suggested that the hardening attitudes toward Muslims in India have contributed to violence against Hindus in Bangladesh.

“The situation that happened in Bangladesh is empowering the [Hindutva](#) politics, and they are trying to exploit it,” said Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, a professor of international relations at Dhaka University, referring to the B.J.P.'s Hindu nationalist ideology. “And at the same time, the Hindutva politics of India is empowering the B.J.P.-type politics in Bangladesh.”

The violence last month in Bangladesh was set off by rumors that a Quran, the Muslim holy book, had been disrespected in a Hindu temple. Seven people have been killed, the police said.

That violence has further deepened sectarian tension in India. In recent weeks, a right-wing Hindu group has been organizing large protests in the Indian state of Tripura, just over the border from Bangladesh, against the anti-Hindu violence there. Police have had to deploy heavy security to protect mosques, after members of the group vandalized at least one mosque and burned shops. A group of lawyers and activists who [went to Tripura to document the damage](#) found themselves charged with violating [a draconian antiterror law](#).

While some B.J.P. officials criticized the violence, Mr. Modi himself has been largely silent. In contrast to Pakistan, where tensions with India sometimes break out into open conflict, Mr. Modi has cultivated good relations with Bangladesh, and harsh words could sour diplomatic ties between New Delhi and Dhaka.

India's neighbors can find friends elsewhere. China, flush with development projects and loans, has actively placed itself as a potentially lucrative alternative. In addition to strengthening economic ties with Pakistan, it has also used Covid-19 vaccines and other aid to improve relations with [Nepal](#), [Sri Lanka](#) and [Bangladesh](#).

But the ruling party's Hindu nationalist ideology has made India more inward-looking, said Aparna Pande, director of the India initiative at the Hudson Institute. Previously, its pluralistic example of governance had avoided stoking tensions, and it took at times a paternalistic view toward its neighbors. Now, she said, Mr. Modi's “neighborhood first” policy appears at odds with the backlashes caused by the Hindu nationalist vision at home.

“If you are pushing a nationalist narrative, it is difficult to then ask your neighbors to not do the same,” Dr. Pande said. “You will then see every country in South Asia becoming more nationalist and, forget about anything else, that creates a strategic challenge for India.”

Today, said Mr. Sinha, the former foreign minister, Mr. Modi’s silence “creates the impression as if we have lost control of the situation or that the state is actively encouraging violence against minorities.”

Mr. Sinha, who quit the B.J.P. and now belongs to an opposition party, was foreign minister immediately after [some of the deadliest](#) communal violence in India in 2002 in Gujarat, where Mr. Modi was the state’s chief minister. He said such violence did not affect India’s standing because the country’s prime minister at the time, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, made clear that the episodes were both unacceptable and isolated.

These days, Mr. Sinha said: “The interlocutor can turn back and say ‘Why don’t you practice at home what you preach to us?’”

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HEADLINE	11/05 Life in ‘Zero Covid’ China
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/asia/china-coronavirus-ruili.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/asia/china-coronavirus-ruili.html</a>
GIST	<p>The southwestern Chinese city of Ruili is small, remote and largely unknown internationally. It is also, when it comes to the coronavirus, perhaps the most tightly regulated place on earth.</p> <p>In the past year, it has been locked down four times, with one shutdown lasting 26 days. Homes in an entire district have been evacuated indefinitely to create a “buffer zone” against cases from elsewhere. Schools have been closed for months, except for a few grades — but only if those students and their teachers do not leave campus.</p> <p>Many residents, including 59-year-old Liu Bin, have gone months without income, in a city that relies heavily upon tourism and trade with neighboring Myanmar. Mr. Liu, who ran a customs brokerage before cross-border movement essentially stopped, estimated he had lost more than \$150,000. He is tested on a near-daily basis. He borrows cigarette money from his son-in-law.</p> <p>“Why do I have to be oppressed like this? My life is important too,” he said. “I’ve actively followed epidemic control measures. What else do we normal people have to do to meet the standards?”</p> <p>As the rest of the world shifts to a strategy of living with the coronavirus, China has <a href="#">remained the last country chasing full elimination</a>, for the most part with success. It has recorded fewer than 5,000 virus-related deaths, and in parts of the country without confirmed cases, the outbreak can <a href="#">feel like a hazy memory</a>.</p> <p>But the residents of Ruili — a lush, subtropical city of about 270,000 people before the pandemic — are facing the extreme and harsh reality of living under a “Zero Covid” policy when even a single case is found.</p> <p>While other Chinese cities have been locked down to control flare-ups, those restrictions have often been limited to certain neighborhoods or been eased after a few weeks. But in Ruili, the past year has consisted of extended paralysis, with people confined to residential complexes for weeks at a time. Even during the gaps between official lockdowns, residents have not been allowed to dine in at restaurants. Many businesses remained closed.</p> <p>Only high school sophomores and juniors, as well as third-year middle school students, have been allowed to resume face-to-face classes — if they <a href="#">live on campus</a>. Classrooms have been converted to dorms. Since students are always around, they <a href="#">also have classes on weekends</a>.</p> <p>One driver for a ride-sharing app <a href="#">told state media</a> he had taken 90 Covid tests over the last seven months. Another parent <a href="#">said</a> that his one-year-old son had been tested 74 times.</p>

Tens of thousands of residents have fled the city for elsewhere in China in the breaks between lockdowns; officials recently [acknowledged](#) that the population had dropped to about 200,000. To control the outflow, the authorities now require people to pay for up to 21 days of pre-departure quarantine.

In a sign of the desperation many residents are feeling, a former deputy mayor of Ruili last month wrote a blog post called “[Ruili Needs the Motherland’s Care](#)” — a stunning move in a country where officials almost never deviate from the government line.

“Every time the city is locked down is another instance of serious emotional and material loss,” wrote the official, Dai Rongli. “Each experience battling the virus is a new accumulation of grievances.”

Ruili has reported just five symptomatic locally transmitted cases in the past month. More than 96 percent of residents in the city and its surrounding area have been vaccinated, [according to state media](#). No cases have been traced to people leaving Ruili for elsewhere in China.

Even so, officials insist that there is little room for adjustment.

“If Ruili’s epidemic does not reach zero, there will be risk of outward transmission,” Ruili’s deputy mayor, Yang Mou, [said](#) at a news conference on Oct. 29.

Jin Dongyan, a virologist at the University of Hong Kong, said Ruili epitomized the Chinese government’s stubborn approach to the pandemic. Since the outbreak began, he said, it has deployed the same playbook of lockdowns and mass testing, without considering potentially less costly tactics.

“They believe that’s the only way that they can be successful, but that is actually not the case,” he said. “The situation is rapidly evolving. Now it is actually very different from 2020.”

In recent weeks, other regions have reimposed restrictions as a new outbreak tied to domestic tourism infected more than 700 people. Roughly 10,000 tourists were stranded in Inner Mongolia after cases were found there. About 30,000 visitors to [Shanghai’s Disneyland](#) spent hours waiting to be tested on Sunday night before they could leave the park. Parts of Beijing are locked down, and many incoming trains and flights have been canceled.

One county in eastern Jiangxi Province [announced](#) that all traffic lights would be turned red, to prevent unnecessary travel. (It later backtracked.)

Ruili is uniquely vulnerable to both the virus and the burdens of lockdown.

Nestled in the corner of Yunnan Province, it shares more than 100 miles of borders with Myanmar, attracting tourists and traders. In 2019, people passed through its border checkpoint nearly 17 million times, [according to official statistics](#).

When China sealed up the country, trade and tourism all but collapsed. Yet Ruili’s borders remained porous, raising fears of imported cases. And the [military coup in Myanmar](#) this year has led some to seek refuge in Ruili, legally or illegally. Some residents have had to dodge stray bullets from the conflict across the border, according to [Chinese media reports](#).

The city’s remote location and small size also meant that many Chinese people did not know about residents’ extended plight.

Then, on Oct. 28, Mr. Dai, the former deputy mayor, published his blog post.

“The pandemic has ruthlessly plundered this city again and again, sucking out its last trace of life,” wrote Mr. Dai, who now lives in Beijing. “The long-term lockdown has brought this city’s development to a dead end. Restarting production and necessary business operations appears extremely urgent.”

The post went viral. Two hashtags about Mr. Dai's letter have been viewed 300 million times on Weibo. Mr. Dai declined to comment further.

People who said they were Ruili residents also posted their stories on social media, which were then widely shared.

They described being unable to visit sick relatives or filmed themselves driving down deserted streets, with row after row of shops and restaurants shuttered. Some residents, unlucky enough to be sent to centralized quarantine, posted images of ramshackle sheds and flooded floors.

The lockdown has had other, more unexpected effects. The government [banned residents from](#) livestreaming about the local jade industry to limit gem orders and the movement of delivery people.

Amid the onslaught of national attention, Ruili officials dismissed the concerns as exaggerated. Mao Xiao, Ruili's Communist Party secretary, [told state media](#) that "at the moment, we do not need" additional help. The day before, he had warned against "criminals" who he said would use "public opinion and false information to disrupt social order."

Still, officials promised to improve quarantine conditions and to bolster financial support for poor residents, through subsidies, gifts of rice and other staples, as well as rent breaks for some companies. They also pledged to increase the number of hotel rooms available for quarantine for those seeking to leave Ruili.

Those measures are likely to do little for people such as Mr. Li, a jade merchant in his 50s who asked to be identified only by his surname out of fear of reprisals. (The Ruili police [have admonished](#) people for protesting lockdown conditions.)

Earlier this year, Mr. Li and a group of fellow investors pooled together about \$3 million for a jade market in Ruili, which they had hoped to open in May. Instead, the premises have sat empty, though they have continued to pay rent. He has heard nothing about government assistance.

Originally, his company employed about 50 people. Now? "We only dare to keep one person, to guard the door," he said. "What can you do? We can't pay them."

The cost of daily living has shot up. A kilogram of bok choy used to cost less than 6 renminbi, or under \$1, Mr. Li said; now the price has jumped to 8 or 10 renminbi.

"The ordinary people," he sighed, "have no way to live."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 House passes \$1T infrastructure bill</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/us/politics/house-infrastructure-reconciliation.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/us/politics/house-infrastructure-reconciliation.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The House passed a \$1 trillion bill on Friday night to <a href="#">rebuild the country's aging public works system</a>, fund new climate resilience initiatives and expand access to high-speed internet service, giving final approval to a central plank of President Biden's economic agenda after a daylong drama that pitted moderate Democrats against progressives.</p> <p>But an even larger social safety net and climate change bill was back on hold, with a half-dozen moderate-to-conservative Democrats withholding their votes until a nonpartisan analysis could tally its price tag.</p> <p>For Mr. Biden, passage of the infrastructure bill fulfilled a marquee legislative goal that he had promised to deliver since the early days of his presidency: the largest single investment of <a href="#">federal resources into infrastructure projects</a> in more than a decade, including a substantial effort to fortify the nation's response to the warming of the planet.</p>



“Tonight, we took a monumental step forward as a nation,” Mr. Biden said in a statement after the vote, lauding both the infrastructure and the social policy bills. “Generations from now, people will look back and know this is when America won the economic competition for the 21st century.”

The White House announced plans for him to speak about the measures at 9:30 a.m. Saturday.

The [drubbing Democrats took](#) in off-year elections on Tuesday had given new urgency to the president’s demand for legislative action.

On Friday, Mr. Biden put his credibility on the line, pleading with liberals to end their monthslong blockade and send him the public works measure immediately without passage of their priority, the social safety net measure. He backed passage of a rule for debating the social policy bill, called the Build Back Better Act, as a tangible sign that it, too, would soon pass.

“He urged us to trust him,” said Representative Jared Huffman, Democrat of California, “but not blindly.”

At 9 p.m., Mr. Biden made that plea public: “I am urging all members to vote for both the rule for consideration of the Build Back Better Act and final passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill tonight,” he wrote. “I am confident that during the week of Nov. 15, the House will pass the Build Back Better Act.”

He was expected to quickly sign the infrastructure bill into law.

It will provide \$550 billion in new funds over 10 years to shore up roads, bridges and highways, improve internet access and modernize the nation’s power grid. The measure also includes the United States’ largest investment to prepare for climate change: \$50 billion to help communities grapple with the devastating fires, floods, storms and droughts that scientists say have been worsened by global warming.

In a late-night vote that followed a day of near-death experiences for Mr. Biden’s agenda, the House passed the infrastructure measure on a 228-to-206 vote, with 13 Republicans bucking their party leadership and joining all but six Democrats in support. Its triumph was something of a vindication of Mr. Biden’s efforts to seek bipartisanship on a key issue that both parties have long viewed as a priority.

But ultimately, passage came not just because of Republican backing but because liberal Democrats decided to trust balking centrists to eventually come to their side. Passage had been stalled for months, while liberals withheld their support to force an agreement on the social policy bill. Progressive Democrats had revolted anew on Friday, with many insisting that they could not back the measure without a vote on the social welfare bill.

But moderates refused to support that legislation without an official cost estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office — which will most likely not arrive until mid-November — forcing Democrats to wrangle a late-night compromise that would allow action.

In the end, enough progressives accepted a written commitment, [released after 10 p.m.](#), from five centrist colleagues that they would back the social safety net and climate package in mid-November, as long as the numbers add up.

“Welcome to my world — this is the Democratic Party,” Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California told reporters at the Capitol as she announced the postponement of the social policy bill. “We are not a lock-step party.” “It’s an additional challenge,” she added. “But I see every challenge as an opportunity.”

The delay in voting on the social policy bill came despite public and private appeals from Mr. Biden. As Ms. Pelosi held a marathon round of meetings in her Capitol office to try to resolve the internal disputes, the president called lawmakers and pushed for a quick resolution on Friday.



Mr. Biden said at the White House that he was asking every House member “to vote yes on both these bills right now.”

He concluded with a succinct message for lawmakers: “Let’s get this done.”

He followed up with private calls to moderate skeptics balking at supporting the social policy bill. Later, Mr. Biden twice phoned Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, the leader of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, in an effort to ease passage of the infrastructure measure, and called in to an hourslong meeting of the caucus, where he was placed on speakerphone to make his case for supporting the infrastructure measure. He postponed a planned weekend trip to his home in Delaware as the negotiations stretched into Friday night.

“At a certain point, we have to trust one another,” said Representative Peter Welch, Democrat of Vermont, as he emerged from the Progressive Caucus meeting.

Liberal Democrats who had demanded that infrastructure measure move in tandem with the social policy bill had indicated that they might oppose the infrastructure measure on its own, dealing Mr. Biden and their leaders an embarrassing defeat. They huddled into the evening on Friday, ordering pizza delivered to the Capitol as they discussed whether to allow the infrastructure measure to proceed.

Ultimately, they did so after winning a painstakingly negotiated written promise from centrists that they would eventually support the social safety and climate measure, once assured of its fiscal impact.

In a statement late Friday night, the centrists declared: “We commit to voting for the Build Back Better Act, in its current form other than technical changes,” as soon as they obtain an estimate from the Congressional Budget Office consistent with White House figures showing that the measure is fully paid for. The group — Representatives Ed Case of Hawaii, Josh Gottheimer of New Jersey, Stephanie Murphy of Florida, Kathleen Rice of New York and Kurt Schrader of Oregon — said it would do so by the week of Nov. 15.

Two of the holdouts, Representatives Jared Golden of Maine and Abigail Spanberger of Virginia, notably did not sign on.

But in her own late-night statement, Ms. Jayapal said it was enough for progressives to allow the infrastructure bill to pass.

For Mr. Biden, approval of the public works measure was welcome progress at a vulnerable moment. The president’s approval ratings have declined in recent months amid concerns about increasing inflation, a persistent pandemic and the messy U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

And he returned from an overseas trip this week to find grim political realities at home, after Republicans won the governor’s race in Virginia and came closer than expected to defeating the Democratic governor of New Jersey. The results underscored a sense of dread among Democrats who had already been bracing for losses in the 2022 midterm elections that could cost them control of Congress.

But if anything, the prospect of losses deepened the divisions imperiling both pillars of the Mr. Biden’s agenda. Liberals, moderates and conservatives had all said the lesson of their off-year election rebuke was that voters needed to see action and competence.

“We were already in high gear to get it done, but if there’s a higher gear, we certainly went into it,” Ms. Jayapal declared.

But if liberal Democrats from safe seats were dug in on their ambitious social welfare and climate change bill, those from swing districts were clearly spooked.

Among the Democrats who demanded a better handle on the social welfare bill's costs were members from tenuous districts, such as Mr. Golden, from northern Maine, Ms. Murphy, from Central Florida, and Ms. Spanberger, whose suburban district outside Richmond, Va., swung sharply right.

But by midday, their efforts had stalled as a 15-minute House vote dragged on more than seven hours — a record, lawmakers said, for the longest vote in the chamber — as Ms. Pelosi toiled to line up support. Republicans, united in opposition to the social policy bill and gleeful over the chaos, forced additional procedural votes to further derail the process.

“Where are the Democrats today?” said Representative Kevin McCarthy of California, the minority leader. “Breaking their own rules, setting new records just keeping votes open, and trying to intimidate and bully their own members to vote for something.”

The delay felt painfully familiar to Democratic lawmakers and Mr. Biden, who have tried and failed twice in the past several weeks to push the pair of bills through the House, only to see their plans impeded by internal divisions.

Democratic leaders tried to use an analysis by the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation and a White House analysis of the spending costs to win over moderate holdouts, to no avail. Top White House aides were seen entering Ms. Pelosi's office as party leaders struggled to win over the moderates.

“It's a very difficult task, and we're working on it,” said Representative Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, the majority leader, as he brushed away questions Friday about whether Democrats would have the necessary votes.

Eventually, top Democrats pulled back on their plans to march forward on the social policy bill and instead signed onto a plan proposed by leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus to shelve it and move to a vote on the infrastructure plan.

They would first take a procedural vote on the safety net and climate plan that would pave the way for considering it later — a show of “good faith,” its proponents said, according to a person with knowledge of discussions within the Congressional Black Caucus.

“What I do know: If I don't get this and I don't get this, and we don't move for something, then we get nothing,” said Representative Joyce Beatty of Ohio, the chairwoman of the caucus. “And everybody wants both of the bills to pass.”

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HEADLINE	11/05 Young activists seek action, protesters rally
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/europe/cop-protests.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=Climate%20and%20Environment">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/world/europe/cop-protests.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=Climate%20and%20Environment</a>
GIST	<p>GLASGOW — Thousands of climate activists from across the world have descended this week on the Scottish city of Glasgow, demanding that nations gathering for a global climate conference produce real, meaningful change.</p> <p>And some of the strongest and most urgent calls for action have come from young protesters who claim that the world they are inheriting is teetering on the brink of a climate catastrophe.</p> <p>They have spent the week <a href="#">disrupting talks held by gas giants</a>, and staging theatrical spectacles on the fringes of the international event, <a href="#">known as COP26</a>. But the protests will crescendo on Friday and Saturday in two days of demonstrations expected to draw up to 100,000 people.</p> <p>On Friday afternoon, crowds streamed in to a leafy public park in central Glasgow for one of the centerpieces of the protest plans. Some protesters carried banners reading, “We are running out of time,” “26 years of blah, blah, blah,” and “System change not climate change.”</p>

The youth-led climate strike was organized by Fridays for Future, the international movement that has grown out of Greta Thunberg's solo school strike that began in 2018.

Ms. Thunberg, whose strike inspired young people the world over to take action on climate change, was met with cheers as she spoke to the crowd following the march. She criticized world leaders for producing ineffectual pledges and allowing the "exploitation of people and nature."

"The leaders are not doing nothing," said Ms. Thunberg. "They are actively creating loopholes, shaping frameworks to benefit themselves to continue profiting from this destructive system."

Moments before she spoke, Vanessa Nakate, an activist from Uganda, called out the inaction of previous COP events.

"How many more of these should they hold until they realize that their inactions are destroying the planet?" she asked.

A slew of activists from South America, Central America, Africa and Asia also addressed the crowd, calling out their national leaders for failings in their home countries and international leaders for ignoring the developing world.

During the march, veteran environmentalists stood alongside families with young children, union representatives, socialist campaigners and young students skipping school to demand greater action from world leaders to address the issue.

Glasgow residents lined the streets to watch the colorful spectacle pass by, as children clutched hand-drawn signs reading, "Stop deforestation," "Save the planet!" and "Act now."

"There's a real responsibility for young people that this will be ours to deal with," said Eilidh Robb, 26, a Scottish climate activist, speaking ahead of the event. "And the mess that we didn't create will be left to us to manage."

Ms. Robb, who is originally from Edinburgh but is now based in Brussels, volunteers with the U.K. Youth Climate Coalition, a British nonprofit that mobilizes young people to take action on climate change. She [traveled to Glasgow this week by train with hundreds of others](#) to take part in the conference and in the protests.

While world leaders this week [managed to secure new agreements to end deforestation and reduce methane emissions](#), raising hopes of real progress, the coming days will see diplomats haggle over further greenhouse gas reductions.

But within the conference, countries are still debating how they can deliver on the unmet promises of years past, including a pledge of \$100 billion in annual climate finance from 2020 to 2025. The commitment from wealthy nations to poorer nations was promised in 2009 and remains unfulfilled.

Countries that are most at risk from the effects of climate change in the developing world are also pushing major carbon-emitting nations to increase their annual targets to keep global temperatures from rising past 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, compared with levels before the Industrial Revolution.

For many of the young protesters, the conference has produced mixed emotions: They expressed concern that their voices were not being heard, but also hope that their activism and presence at the event would help inspire change.

"It's a huge burden for young people to dedicate their lives to calling out politicians who are paid to represent us," Ms. Robb said.

The young activists say they want more than just reduced emissions: They would also like an acknowledgment of the systemic issues intertwined with climate change response, including inequality and poverty. They want solutions that work for everyone and that help dismantle racism, sexism and the neglect of developing nations.

Alejandra Kopaitic, 33, a Chilean master's student studying the environment and climate change at the University of Manchester, in England, came to Glasgow with her husband to participate in the march. She wants governments and corporations to make more immediate commitments.

"We need a whole system change," she said. "If we don't change business as usual and how we are producing things, taking resources from the ground and overconsuming, it is going to be difficult."

Philip Klein, 10, was out of his Glasgow school on Friday to attend the march with his father and a schoolmate.

"I want a good future," Philip said. "Hopefully we can fix it."

Laura Kelly, 16, a student from Edinburgh, was blunt: "This is the moment; there is no better moment than now," she said as she pointed to her banner, which read, "Action now or swim later."

Rudy Sinclair, 16, was also missing school in Glasgow, but said that his school encouraged taking the day off to join the march.

"We feel that the more people that come here the better the chance that the government will take notice and feel the pressure to do something," he said.

The presence of environmental activists at COP26 itself has been muted because of pandemic restrictions, as well as difficulty in obtaining vaccines, visas and affordable accommodations, leaving some unable to attend.

The Britain-based COP Coalition, an umbrella group of climate activists and organizations, has labeled the conference the "least accessible climate summit ever," pointing to chaotic crowding and some delegates being told to dial into the meeting from hotel rooms.

The format of the event — which was flipped from previous years to begin with speeches from international leaders, including President Biden — also left many activists barred from entering the conference center this week because of heightened security.

Monicah Kamandau, 27, a Kenyan climate activist who traveled to Glasgow, has long called for the world's richest countries that are the most responsible for climate change to pay their share of addressing the problem, and for greater inclusivity of youth voices in debates and solutions.

She is hoping to see the \$100 billion climate finance commitment become a reality, with clear directions for mitigation and adaptation, and mechanisms put in place for countries to be held accountable to their commitments.

"I want to be very realistic and look at the fact that this is the 26th summit on climate discussions," Ms. Kamandau said. "And my view is that over that time, there have been a lot of promises made, but they have not been implemented."

In particular, women and activists from developing nations — who are among those most affected by extreme weather driven by climate change — are being left out of the most crucial conversations around climate change, many activists say.

In a survey of people in Brazil, India, South Africa and Vietnam, which all face imminent threats from climate change, ActionAid International, a charity group, found that nearly half of respondents think that

	<p>developing countries are being excluded from representation at the climate talks. And three-quarters think that people from these regions will be most affected by the decisions made at the summit.</p> <p>Diaka Salena Koroma, a climate activist from Sierra Leone, was unable to attend because her visa was delayed, despite having been invited to participate.</p> <p>She began campaigning for climate justice <a href="#">in 2017 after a mudslide set off by torrential rain killed hundreds in Freetown, her country's capital</a>, and said women and girls on the frontline of the climate crisis like her need to have more visibility.</p> <p>“We are born in a system where our voices — our existence — doesn’t even matter,” she said of young people from developing countries.</p> <p>Ms. Koroma, who spoke by video chat from her home, said she wanted to see climate funds be distributed directly to those already most affected by climate change and broader commitments from wealthy nations.</p> <p>“We can’t play politics with this kind of issue,” she said. “Climate change — it surpasses every other issue we have.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Killed by police for being armed: with a car</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/police-traffic-stops-shooting.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/police-traffic-stops-shooting.html</a>
GIST	<p>PHENIX CITY, Ala. — On a Sunday in May 2017, a patrol car sat outside the city’s oldest public housing project, waiting for anyone acting suspiciously. The two police officers heard Cedric Mifflin before they saw him, blasting music from a silver Mercury Grand Marquis. Then they tried to pull him over: He wasn’t wearing a seatbelt.</p> <p>Mr. Mifflin, a 27-year-old Black man, kept driving. What happened next is disputed, but how it ended is certain. Officer Michael Seavers leapt out of the patrol car, drew his gun and fired 16 times at the moving car. He thought Mr. Mifflin intended to run him over, he said later.</p> <p>“I had never felt the fear that I had at that moment,” Officer Seavers, who is white, told investigators in a statement. He said he thought of what a vehicle can do “to a human body and how I would die if I didn’t react.”</p> <p>The officer’s defense of killing Mr. Mifflin, who wielded neither a gun nor a knife, is one repeated over and over across the country: The vehicle was a weapon. In a New York Times investigation of car stops that left <a href="#">more than 400</a> similarly unarmed people dead over the last five years, those words were routinely used to explain why police officers had fired at drivers.</p> <p>When asked in a deposition whether a man he had fatally shot in 2017 had used a weapon, an officer in <a href="#">Forest Park, Ill.</a>, answered, “Other than a moving vehicle, no.”</p> <p>Minutes after sheriff’s deputies near <a href="#">San Leandro, Calif.</a>, killed a shoplifting suspect and injured a passenger in an S.U.V. in early 2019, an officer asked what weapons they had been armed with. “A vehicle,” one deputy replied.</p> <p>And a lawyer for a sheriff’s deputy who shot a driver in <a href="#">Wichita, Kan.</a>, in late 2019 said the motorist had used “a 4,500-pound vehicle as a weapon.”</p> <p>In about 250 of the cases, The Times found that police officers had fired into vehicles that they later claimed posed such a threat. Relative to the population, Black motorists were overrepresented among those killed.</p>

Like Mr. Mifflin, the other drivers had been pursued for nonviolent offenses, many of them minor. A seatbelt ticket in Phenix City that would have cost \$41. A cracked taillight in [Georgia](#), a broken headlight in [Colorado](#), an expired registration tag in [Texas](#). Most motorists were killed while attempting to flee.

The country's largest cities, from New York to Los Angeles, [have barred](#) officers from shooting at moving vehicles. The U.S. Justice Department [has warned](#) against the practice for decades, pressuring police departments to forbid it. Police academies don't even train recruits how to fire at a car. The risk of injuring innocent people is considered too great; the idea of stopping a car with a bullet is viewed as wishful thinking.

"Bad idea. Bad to do," said Carmen Best, the former Seattle police chief, in an interview. "If you think the vehicle is coming toward you, get yourself out of the way."

Moving vehicles can be deadly. Nine officers have been fatally run over, pinned or dragged by drivers in vehicles approached for minor or nonviolent offenses in the past five years.

But in many instances, local police officers, state troopers and sheriff's deputies [put themselves at risk](#) by jumping in front of moving cars, then aiming their guns at the drivers as if in a Hollywood movie, according to body-camera footage. Or they reached into cars and became entangled with motorists, then opened fire.

Often, the drivers were trying to get away from officers, edging around them, not toward them, the footage shows, and the officers weren't in the path of the vehicle when they fired.

"You see many where bullets are in the back of the car, in the side of the car," said Geoffrey Alpert, a criminologist at the University of South Carolina who has researched high-risk police activities for more than 30 years. "In the high 90 percentile of cases I've seen, the person's just trying to get away."

Some officers who fatally shot motorists didn't appear to be in any jeopardy at all, The Times review showed. In some cases the vehicle was stationary, even incapable of moving. Yet prosecutors found that the claim that officers feared for their lives or the lives of others was enough to justify all but the rarest of shootings.

Officer Seavers [faced no charges](#) in the Mifflin case. Phenix City and state officials have declined to release police body- and dashboard-camera videos of the fatal encounter. "All it'll do is inflame people, and people don't understand the fine points of the law," the city's lawyer, James McKoon, said in an interview. "And this guy was scared to death when he shot."

Jeremy Bauer, a forensics expert in Seattle who has testified for police departments nationwide and for families of people killed, reviewed the state investigative report, witness testimony, photographs and other materials and concluded that the officer had not been in peril. It would have been impossible, he said, for Mr. Mifflin to have been headed for Officer Seavers when the shots were fired.

"The officer just wouldn't have been in the path of the vehicle," Dr. Bauer said.

### **Enacting a Ban**

Once, Phenix City was known as the [Sin City](#) of the South, and its major industry was vice: gambling, brothels and bootleg booze. In 1940, the U.S. secretary of war called it the "wickedest city in America."

Politicians and the police were on the take. After a top candidate in the Alabama attorney general's race in 1954 pledged to clean up the city, he was gunned down.

Now, the town has a new slogan: ["Positively Phenix City."](#) Local officials still boast of its 2007 BusinessWeek designation as one of the country's most affordable suburbs — just across the Chattahoochee River from Columbus, Ga. — for raising a family.

The city is typical of many communities where fatal police encounters with motorists have occurred over the past five years. It's in the South. It has fewer than 50 patrol officers. With under 39,000 residents, it's relatively small. The police department has lower training and qualification requirements than those of big cities. A G.E.D is enough.

"They're not Navy SEALs," said Kenneth Davis, the district attorney in Russell County, home to Phenix City. "These guys are average guys."

The chief, Ray Smith, joined the department 32 years ago and has led it for the past 12. His two predecessors each spent decades with the department. Its use-of-force policy — governing how officers are permitted to subdue people — has not been revised to include reforms that many other departments have adopted. Chief Smith didn't respond to multiple requests for an interview. Neither the police department nor Mr. McKoon responded to detailed questions about The Times's findings.

Law enforcement killed two unarmed Black men here in 2013: One was shot after he drove through a stop sign, led officers on a chase, fled his car and [allegedly refused](#) to come out from under a vehicle; another, [naked and mentally ill](#), died after being stunned with a Taser 19 times and then restrained.

But there was no citywide protest, no [Ferguson](#) fallout, no [George Floyd](#) moment.

Phenix City's use-of-force policy mentions that police officers can fire their weapons to "destroy" a threatening animal. It allows for shooting "during range practice or competitive sporting events." While it prohibits firing from inside a moving vehicle, it doesn't say anything about shooting at moving vehicles. That is unusual: Out of nearly 200 departments that had such shootings and provided their policies to The Times, just 13 did not address the issue.

"It's something that has never come up," said Chief Darryl Laxton, in Oneida, Tenn. He added: "This is not a very active place. A lot doesn't go on."

Most other departments surveyed had policies prohibiting officers from shooting at moving vehicles — but they were ambiguously worded and allowed officers to do so if they felt the need.

Critics of the practice argue that shooting at a driver is ineffective or even disastrous. "It's like you've created an unguided missile," said Chuck Wexler, the executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a law enforcement policy nonprofit. "You've basically lost control."

To identify cases where police fired into vehicles, The Times reviewed data collected by [The Washington Post](#) and the research groups [Mapping Police Violence](#) and [Fatal Encounters](#). Reporters then filed hundreds of public-records requests, analyzed more than 115 video and audio recordings, examined investigative records and interviewed dozens of experts and motorists' families. In addition to the 250 otherwise unarmed drivers, scores of such shootings involved motorists who held weapons or were being pursued for violent crimes.

The movement [to stop shooting into moving vehicles](#) began in New York City in 1972. The police department banned the practice as part of a package of reforms after an officer shot and killed an 11-year-old boy, who had been joyriding with two friends, and wounded the driver and two passers-by.

In 1972, the city's police officers were involved in 994 shooting incidents of any kind; the next year, 665. By 2019, officers fired their guns only 52 times. And since the ban, not one on-duty officer has been killed by a vehicle fleeing a traffic stop.

The nation's 25 largest cities have since adopted similar bans. (Some carve out exceptions for terrorists aiming vehicles into crowds.)



No one disputes that cars can be deadly: Scores of officers have been killed working accident scenes or writing tickets. But no officer in any big city that has banned the practice has been fatally run over by a vehicle he or she stopped.

The bans haven't entirely stopped the police from fatally shooting unarmed motorists in moving vehicles not suspected in violent crimes. Still, only 11 such deaths have occurred in those departments collectively in the last five years.

Compare that with Honolulu, a city of nearly 350,000. Between 2016 and 2020, officers there [shot four unarmed](#) motorists.

On April 1, the department tightened its rules, but with a big exception: Officers could shoot if "the vehicle's movement poses a threat that justifies the use of deadly force."

Four days later, officers pursued a stolen car suspected in an armed robbery and two purse snatchings. After it stopped, officers fired 15 shots, hitting the 16-year-old driver, [Iremamber Sykap](#), in the back of the head, records show. Two officers said they shot to protect themselves and "members of the public." One said the teenager had "rammed" his patrol car and "reversed" directly at him.

But body-cam videos show that the patrol car wasn't rammed, the car didn't reverse directly at the officer and officers fired when it was moving away.

The three officers were criminally charged, but a judge [dismissed](#) the charges. The officers are back on patrol.

### **A Stop, a Chase and 16 Bullets**

Mr. Mifflin's friends thought he would become a comedian. They called him "Kevin Hart" because he looked and behaved like the comic-actor. Mr. Mifflin pretended to find the nickname tiresome — "Lol here u go," he'd write on Facebook — but he embraced it.

He sported a tattoo of praying hands on his left forearm; his right was inked with the name of his daughter, Shay, whom he fathered in high school. If friends got annoyed at him, he'd badger them into forgiveness. Only 5-foot-4 and 130 pounds, Mr. Mifflin acted streetwise, posing like a tough guy in photos. But that was a front; he never got into fights, and friends often mocked him for how he spent his Sunday mornings.

"He was the one who stayed in church with his grandma," said Dontrell Grier, Mr. Mifflin's stepbrother.

Mr. Mifflin lived in Columbus with his grandparents, a social worker and a retired small-town Georgia police chief who instructed him to always follow police orders. When Mr. Mifflin was 22, he agreed to testify in court after witnessing a mother leave a toddler alone in a car for at least 20 minutes.

He worked stocking shelves at Walmart and Piggly Wiggly. He loved cars, but he allowed more than eight years of traffic tickets for infractions like driving without a seatbelt spiral into a crisis, including a suspended driver's license, a misdemeanor for not showing up in court, thousands of dollars in fines and potential jail time, according to court records.

Mr. Mifflin stole \$265 from the Piggly Wiggly when he was 26, about the same time he lost his job there, records show. And Walmart later terminated him.

On that fateful Sunday in May 2017, he drove from Columbus to Phenix City to pick up a friend at the Frederick Douglass Homes, a public-housing complex with mostly Black residents.

The officers' decision to pull him over appeared to be a "pretextual" stop, when the police stop drivers — often people of color — for an infraction and then look for a more serious offense, two policing experts said.

The officers seemed to be “looking for a reason to stop him because they felt that he was up to no good — he plays loud music, he doesn’t have a seatbelt,” said Michael Gennaco, a former federal prosecutor who works with police departments to improve accountability and reviewed the case for The Times.

Why did Mr. Mifflin drive off? Maybe because of the suspended license. Maybe because of a story his stepbrother liked to tell: Mr. Grier had been a passenger in a car pulled over after the driver initially didn’t obey commands to stop. The Phenix City officers had aimed their weapons at him and dragged him out of the vehicle and across a parking lot.

Whatever the reason, instead of complying, Mr. Mifflin sped across a busy road. The police chased him. At that point, he was just four minutes from the Georgia line. He only needed to make it to the corner near Ed’s barbecue, take a couple of turns and cross a bridge.

But an S.U.V. blocked his path: Djaron Green, a manager for a financial company, was about to turn into the restaurant for lunch.

So Mr. Mifflin whipped his car into Ed’s parking lot, stalling out, Mr. Green recalled in an interview. Sirens blaring, the cruiser came to a stop, pointing toward Mr. Mifflin’s rear passenger door, according to the report by the Alabama State Bureau of Investigation, which examines any officer-involved death.

Officer Seavers jumped out of the passenger side of the patrol car. Gun drawn, he confronted Mr. Mifflin.

The driver backed his car away from the restaurant — the officer later described the vehicle’s “spinning tires” to investigators, according to the state report, obtained by The Times from Mr. Mifflin’s family. The document included some details from the unreleased body- and dash-cam videos, mentioning that Mr. Mifflin’s “front right tire was turned to the right towards the area of Officer Seavers.”

The patrol car driver, Cpl. Jason Searcy, told investigators that he had begun to reverse the cruiser and didn’t see anything, but “heard several gunshots.”

Officer Seavers did not reply to requests for comment; most of the other officers mentioned in this article declined to comment or could not be reached. Officer Seavers told state investigators that the Mercury had come straight at him. So did an Ed’s employee who was inside the restaurant during the encounter; she did not respond to messages from The Times.

But Mr. Green, the closest witness, said the car never came near Officer Seavers. Instead, he said, it appeared to move around him. And Dr. Bauer, the forensic expert, concluded that Officer Seavers was never in harm’s way.

Dr. Bauer created a video reconstruction for The Times, drawing on the state report and other records. (The Times offered to let state and city officials review the video; they declined.) The officer initially fired twice; both shots entered the passenger side of the front window at a sharp angle, indicating that the car was moving past the officers, Dr. Bauer said. Both hit Mr. Mifflin. Either would have been fatal.

The vehicle kept traveling forward; Officer Seavers turned his body and his gun to follow. Four bullets entered the passenger’s side of the car. As it passed, the patrolman emptied his magazine, striking the back of the car multiple times, the state investigation shows.

“His life was not in danger if the vehicle was leaving,” said Isaac Lawrence, Mr. Mifflin’s grandfather, who added that he had been trained never to fire at moving vehicles. He wanted to ask the officer, “So why did you shoot him?”

Mr. Mifflin’s sedan drifted across a road and finally stopped at a used-car lot. At first, the two officers thought Mr. Mifflin had fled on foot. Instead, he was slumped over, dying from seven bullet wounds.

### **Creating Their Own Jeopardy**

In November 2020, Deputy Jafet Santiago-Miranda of the Brevard County Sheriff's Office searched for a stolen car in Cocoa, Fla. He spotted a similar vehicle, which pulled into a driveway, then backed out. The deputy left his cruiser and stepped in front of the car, then fired 10 times as it moved slowly forward, the dash-cam video shows.

The driver, A.J. Crooms, 16, and a passenger, Sincere Pierce, 18, who had been planning to hang out with a friend, were dead. [Officials later said](#) that the vehicle was not the stolen car. (As in several other cases, guns were later found in or near the car, but they played no role in the confrontation.)

This April, Deputy Nolan Davis of the Delta County Sheriff's Office in Colorado tried to pull over a white Honda with no license plates. The driver fled, eventually running over "stop sticks" placed by another deputy, which flattened the Honda's tires. As the car attempted to maneuver between Deputy Davis's patrol truck and a white truck, he stepped out of his car into the path of the Honda, [body-cam footage](#) shows. Deputy Davis moved backward as he fired eight times, even after the Honda passed him. Paige Pierce, 26, was dead.

The driver "was about to hit me," Deputy Davis told his superior. "I had no choice, Sarge."

Deputy Davis later said that when he stepped from his patrol truck he thought that the driver may have exited the Honda and been "possibly stopping to flee on foot," according to a review by the district attorney.

Neither deputy lost their job or faced criminal charges.

In dozens of fatal cases over the past five years, officers reacted similarly, jumping in front of vehicles or failing to move out of the way.

Such decisions are dangerous for both motorists and officers. Over the past five years, three officers who leaned inside vehicles during stops were killed when the drivers took off. Six others were run over by vehicles they were facing down, like [Amy Caprio](#), a Baltimore County police officer killed in May 2018 after responding to a call of a suspicious vehicle connected to a burglary.

"I just wanted to get away," wrote 17-year-old Dawnta Harris to a judge after running over the officer. "From the bottom of my heart, I thought she was going to move."

Many big cities that ban shooting into moving vehicles also say officers should not step in front of cars. But of the departments that responded to The Times, more than two-thirds — mostly outside big cities — had no such policy.

"If we have to write a policy to tell someone to not step in front of a moving vehicle, then we wouldn't be hiring very smart people, would we?" said Capt. Mike McCoy of the Fulshear Police Department in Texas, which has no such ban. "Sometimes, common sense must take over."

Shootings sometimes had unintended consequences. In the cases reviewed by The Times, law enforcement officers did not just hit drivers: They killed eight passengers and injured at least 17 more.

In December 2017, for instance, a part-time deputy in Grundy County, Tenn., named Mike Holmes kept firing after a Mustang he had pursued for reckless driving fled — hitting the side and rear of the car multiple times. One bullet hit the passenger, Shelby Comer, 20, killing her. (In an interview, Mr. Holmes, who is no longer in law enforcement, said the driver had pointed a gun at him; no gun was ever recovered.)

Mr. Holmes was found guilty of criminally negligent homicide, one of three law enforcement officers convicted after vehicle-as-weapon shootings in the past five years. "If I've ever had a regret in my life, it's making that decision to pursue that Mustang that night," he said at his sentencing hearing. "I should have discontinued the pursuit. I should have stopped."

He was given three years' probation.

### **A Pair of Settlements**

The day after Cedric Mifflin was killed, Phenix City's police chief said the encounter was traumatic not only for the man's family "but for the entire police department." He described the death not as a killing but as a "situation."

"We're going to try to find out everything that we can about how to avoid it in the future," Chief Smith pledged at a news conference.

But as of August, Phenix City had not changed its use-of-force policy to even mention shooting at moving vehicles. Officer Seavers was still a patrol officer. The police department did not respond to questions about whether he had faced any discipline.

In his written statement, the officer said he fired at the rear of the vehicle because if Mr. Mifflin had just tried "to kill a police officer, he wouldn't hesitate to kill a citizen."

State investigators waited two days to question Officer Seavers and did not record their interview with him, records show. Mr. Gennaco, one of the nation's top police oversight consultants, described the state's inquiry as "inconsistent with basic investigative protocols."

Mr. Davis, the county's district attorney, brought the case before a grand jury, typical in police shootings. He called a handful of witnesses and played the body- and dash-cam videos. Police found no weapons or drugs in the car. The grand jury opted not to charge him.

"I honestly thought it could go either way," Mr. Davis recalled.

After the grand jury decision, Mr. Davis suggested to Mr. Mifflin's mother, Pochya Sanders, that she get a lawyer — advice he says he always gives in cases like this. She hunted for someone willing to sue Phenix City, she said, but most lawyers told her that Alabama juries side with the police.

Two months after the lawyer she eventually found filed a wrongful-death suit, the city offered Ms. Sanders \$100,000 to settle. Her lawyer, Kenneth Shinbaum, advised her to take it, even though neither of them had seen the video footage. So she agreed. (The law firm got 50 percent of the settlement, a high rate for such contingency fee arrangements.)

The city then offered to show her the videos, but she decided that she couldn't watch her son die. Now, Ms. Sanders said in an interview, she wants them to be made public. "I just need the truth," she said.

Officer Seavers also sued the city — a workers' compensation claim over an "accident occurring on the job" the day of Mr. Mifflin's death. The officer said he suffered hearing loss that day, in all likelihood because of gunfire. The city settled for \$5,500.

No police or city official reached out to Mr. Mifflin's family after he was killed, his mother said. She was the one to identify her son's bullet-ridden body. "I carried him for nine months. I'm the first person he ever talked to, the first person he ever smelled," she said.

She chose a baby blue coffin. At the Looking Good clothing store in downtown Columbus, she picked out a \$50 blue suit for him. Blue was his color.

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HEADLINE	11/06 States' infrastructure funding to-do list
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/states-infrastructure-bill-funding.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/states-infrastructure-bill-funding.html</a>

SACRAMENTO — On the highway over the Teton Pass in Wyoming, avalanches have been threatening motorists since the 1960s. In Washington and Oregon, drivers live with the daily awareness that, in a major earthquake, the bridge between Vancouver and Portland will probably collapse. In California, residents are increasingly at the mercy of out-of-control wildfires and megadroughts — and their stratospheric costs.

America's to-do list has been growing for years, since well before President Biden and a bipartisan committee in Congress agreed this year to a historic upgrade of the nation's aging infrastructure. On Friday, the measure — held up for months amid negotiations over some \$2 trillion in other spending — finally passed.

"This is a game changer," said Mark Poloncarz, the county executive in New York's Erie County. "Right off the bat, I have somewhere around \$150 million in capital projects we could move, from bringing our wastewater treatment system into the 20th century to smaller bridges, some of which are 100 years old."

Mark Weitenbeck, treasurer of the Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers and a retiree from suburban Milwaukee, celebrated the potential expansion of rail service: "While we have been doing nothing, the Chinese have been building 20,000 miles of high-speed rail line."

Gov. Gavin Newsom of California said in a statement: "President Biden understands the critical need to build a climate-resilient future." He added that the new funding will "bolster our clean transportation infrastructure, help mitigate some of the worst impacts of climate change, and accelerate new projects that will create thousands of jobs."

With nearly \$600 billion in new federal aid to improve highways, bridges, dams, public transit, rail, ports, airports, water quality and broadband over 10 years, the legislation is a once-in-a-generation chance to overhaul the nation's public works system. And it offers a rare opportunity for states that for decades have been forced to balance huge short-term backlogs of repairs and upgrades against larger, longer-term projects and needs.

The federal outlay, while less generous than President Biden initially proposed, is still immense by any measure. According to the White House, the transportation aid alone is the largest federal investment in transit history and the largest federal investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak in 1971.

Some \$110 billion will be allotted to roads, bridges and other major surface transportation projects. Another \$66 billion will go to passenger and freight rail, including enough money to eliminate Amtrak's maintenance backlog. Yet another \$39 billion will modernize public transit, and \$11 billion more will be set aside for transportation safety, including programs to reduce fatalities among pedestrians and cyclists.

Broadband systems will get a \$65 billion infusion, as will investments to rebuild the electricity grid to refurbish power lines and accommodate renewable energy sources. A \$55 billion pool of funds would expand access to clean drinking water. Some \$25 billion would go to airports and \$17 billion to ports.

Government agencies will determine which projects are funded, but some state priorities were written into the bill during negotiations.

For example, several provisions benefit Alaska, whose Senator Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, was a core member of the bipartisan group of senators who helped hammer out the legislation. Included in the bill is \$250 million for a pilot program to develop an electric or low-emitting ferry that would almost certainly go to her state, which has the most miles of marine highway.

Another \$1 billion program will pay for a ferry system to reach rural communities such as those in Alaska; the bill allows it to be operated and maintained with federal highway dollars. And other parts of the bill will pay to fix more than 140 bridges, along with more than 300 miles of the highway that stretches across Alaska's border and into Canada.

West Virginia's senators, Joe Manchin III, a Democrat, and Shelley Moore Capito, a Republican, also helped draft pieces of the legislation, which includes a \$2 billion rural grant program expected to direct funding toward the Appalachian highway system. A stretch of that system, Corridor H — intended to connect Interstate 79 in north-central West Virginia to Interstate 81 in Virginia — has gone unfinished for more than a half-century, but will now get a jump start. The bill also pumps more than \$11 billion into a program to clean up toxic leaks from abandoned coal mines, an undertaking estimated to cost at least \$2 billion in West Virginia alone.

Mostly, however, the legislation will address public works challenges that have long confounded the political and financial ability of states to address them. Experts predicted it will reshape priorities across the country and boost critical projects.

New Jersey, for example, could tap the new funds to help construct the proposed Gateway Tunnel, easing chronic congestion on the train route that links the state's population centers to New York. Nearly a decade after Hurricane Sandy flooded the tunnel to New York, leaving structural damage, progress has stalled amid estimates of up to \$13 billion to complete repairs.

Along the Gulf Coast, Louisiana officials are eyeing the money to help speed a long-studied passenger rail route between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. In the Pacific Northwest, where the Interstate 5 bridge connecting Oregon and Washington over the Columbia River is at risk of collapsing in a major earthquake, the spending could help settle years of political disagreement and pay for a new, more resilient structure with space for bicycle lanes and pedestrians.

In Michigan, the bill will infuse a record \$1 billion into a decade-old program to restore and protect the Great Lakes, where drinking water and wildlife have been compromised by pollution. In Wyoming, where the threat of avalanches annually shuts down Wyoming Highway 22 through the mountains, impeding commercial traffic, it could help fund a tunnel through the Teton Pass.

The legislation also offers a critical lifeline to states and cities struggling to curb greenhouse gas pollution in the face of the escalating disruptions from climate change. In the Northeast, \$7.5 billion in funding for zero- and low-emission buses and ferries could help Connecticut and New Jersey to electrify municipal bus fleets. A loan program in the bill also will help local governments in states like Michigan set up projects to reduce the risk and damage from extreme flooding and eroding shorelines.

Other parts of the legislation will address longstanding equity and civic design issues created by old freeway projects, which split many cities, leveled homes and historic landmarks and worsened car dependence and segregation. In Minnesota, it could advance a proposed revamping of the I-94 corridor between St. Paul and Minneapolis, reconnecting neighborhoods that were cut off from one another in the 1960s. And in Connecticut, it could boost projects to help reunite sections of Hartford and East Hartford that were fractured more than 60 years ago by interstates.

Few states, however, are likely to feel the measure's impact as widely as California, where 40 million people have come to rely on freeways, aqueducts, sea walls, dams and other feats of engineering to maintain their way of life.

Parched by megadrought and scorched by towering wildfires, the state has pumped billions of dollars in recent years into water conservation, forest clearance, firefighting and renewable energy initiatives. Federal money, state officials said, would supercharge that push.

A pot of more than \$8 billion for Western water projects, for instance, includes billions for water recycling systems and groundwater storage, critical to California's conservation efforts. More funding in the bill will help upgrade aging dams and canals and perhaps underwrite desalination projects.

Disaster funds in the measure will help mitigate the danger and impact of wildfires and other natural disasters, allowing the state, for example, to bury power lines in rural areas where sparks from old equipment have set off some of California's most destructive infernos. Also on tap will be federal funding

to bring the pay of federal wildland firefighters into parity with the state's far better paid fire crews, addressing critical shortages of experienced crews in a state where most of the forested wilderness is on federal land.

The new federal money could deliver a boost, as well, to the high-speed rail line that California has been trying for a decade to construct between its largest cities and its rural Central Valley. In recent years, the priority has been merely to complete an electrified route between Merced and Bakersfield. But with additional funding, state officials say they could expand to the Bay Area and the Los Angeles Basin, connecting one of the state's most economically depressed regions to major cities and better-paying jobs.

One small part of the measure, however, has been especially anticipated in California: a \$7.5 billion initiative to build a nationwide network of chargers for electric vehicles. Although 40 percent of the electric vehicles in the nation are sold in California, sales still lag in part because car buyers fear they will be unable to easily recharge on long car trips. So far, even electric vehicles with long ranges — Teslas, for instance — lack the power to make the 400-mile journey between San Francisco and Los Angeles without stopping for a charge.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Global food prices surge, inflation spreads</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-food-prices-surge-as-inflation-spreads-11636119367?mod=hp_listb_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-food-prices-surge-as-inflation-spreads-11636119367?mod=hp_listb_pos1</a>
GIST	<p>SÃO PAULO—Earlier this year, Celia Matos, a single mother from São Paulo's Paraisópolis favela, could afford to buy the basics to feed her family. Now, she says, with the price of meat and other foods up by 30%, she often goes to bed hungry so there will be enough rice and beans for her four children.</p> <p>"It's humiliating," said Ms. Matos, 41. "Sometimes I just want to cry...I buy gas to cook and then I can't afford food, or if I buy food then I don't have money to buy soap." She said she can't even afford the butcher shop's leftover bags of bones.</p> <p>Rising food prices are causing increasing hardship across a swath of the developing world, from Peru to the Philippines. In October, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization says, world food prices hit their highest level since 2011.</p> <p>National governments and aid groups warn that the rise in food prices is translating into more hunger and malnutrition, especially for poor families already struggling with the other economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The rise has been particularly sharp in Latin America, where widespread inflation has pushed up the prices of most goods and the U.N. estimates that tens of millions of people are malnourished or skipping meals.</p> <p>In Asia, where countries have generally experienced less inflation, bad weather has hit crops, leading to price increases in some places. Heavy rains in India in recent months have caused flooding and landslides, destroying crops and sending up the price of vegetables such as cauliflowers and onions.</p> <p>"We manage by eating just rice, sometimes bread with sugar. Is there any other option?," said Shanti Horo, a 41-year-old cook and single mother from New Delhi.</p> <p>In China, heavy rains have also hit top vegetable-growing provinces, deepening supply shortages that have arisen as the nation recovers from the effects of the pandemic. The Philippines and some other Southeast Asian countries have also struggled with higher prices for vegetables and palm oil.</p> <p>In Latin America, the damage from rising food prices may be deeper and more long-lasting, economists and policy makers have warned.</p> <p>The region's central banks have aggressively raised interest rates in an effort to curb inflation. Brazil and Chile both recently announced their biggest interest rate increases in two decades.</p>



That is tough medicine to swallow in a region that suffered the world's deepest economic contraction from the pandemic as well as its highest per capita death rate from Covid-19, according to figures from Our World in Data.

"Inflation has been particularly problematic in Latin America where it's risen much more sharply than in other regions," said William Jackson, chief emerging markets economist at London-based research firm Capital Economics.

After recording paltry growth in the several years before the pandemic, Brazil and other parts of the region now face stagflation, a toxic combination of no growth and higher prices, he said.

Inflation is running above central banks' targets across the region—in Brazil's case, three times above the target. The country's worst drought in almost a century has also hit crops and dried up the reservoirs that power hydroelectric dams, adding pressure to electricity prices.

Rising food and energy prices have also driven inflation higher in Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Chile. In Brazil, beef and eggs are more than 20% more expensive than last year, while the cost of chicken and tomatoes has risen almost 30%, according to a study by Getulio Vargas Foundation, or FGV.

Julieta Irureta, a 27-year-old nurse from Buenos Aires, said she can no longer afford to give her 4-year-old son the balanced diet he needs. "We spent almost two years risking our lives on the front line, and now, on our wages, it's getting harder to eat," she said.

Customers used to ask butchers in the city for cheap cuts like chicken giblets to feed their pets; now they are buying those same cuts to feed their families.

Miguelina Espindola, a 60-year-old maid, said she has struggled to find work since the man whose house she cleaned died from Covid-19. Even when she does, so much of her wage goes on food now that she can't buy the Diabetes medication she needs. "I end up losing out, like always."

In Paraisópolis on the southwestern outskirts of São Paulo, Ms. Matos has taken to waiting in line for hours each day at a local community center run by G10 Favelas, a nonprofit organization that gives out free meals in Brazil's favela slum communities.

Several weeks ago, the center had to start shutting its gates before lunchtime after fights erupted when supplies ran out.

The center relies on donations from supermarkets and the wealthy, but as Brazil's Covid-19 death rate has fallen those offerings have started to dry up.

"People don't seem to get it," said Gilson Rodrigues, director of G10 Favelas. "The situation is even worse now for the poor than it was during the middle of the pandemic."

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HEADLINE	11/05 Delta variant fades, leisure travel rebounds
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/leisure-travel-rebounds-as-delta-variant-fades-11636140328?mod=hp_lead_pos9">https://www.wsj.com/articles/leisure-travel-rebounds-as-delta-variant-fades-11636140328?mod=hp_lead_pos9</a>
GIST	<p>Vacationers are returning to the roads and sky in the U.S. after an earlier <a href="#">pullback caused by the Delta variant</a>, setting expectations for a busy holiday travel season.</p> <p>After nearly two years of disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, travel and leisure companies are reporting strong sales gains and interest from tourists. Bookings are rising. Rooms are filling up. Shows are being added.</p>

Uncertainties still remain. Business travel is returning more slowly, recovery in some parts of the world is choppy and another rise in Covid-19 cases is a threat. But executives say the disruption from the Delta variant in late summer has mostly passed.

“The travel rebound is here despite the continued pandemic,” [Airbnb](#) Inc. Chief Executive Brian Chesky said Thursday. Shares of Airbnb rose 13% Friday following the home-sharing company’s earnings update.

The Delta wave of the Covid-19 pandemic appears past its peak, with new cases, hospitalizations and deaths declining in most U.S. states. Public-health experts say [factors driving the decline](#) likely include an incremental uptake in vaccines and the return of precautions like mask-wearing in certain areas.

Investors picked up on the recent optimism expressed by travel and leisure companies and the prospects of a reopening economy. Shares of many airlines, cruise operators, casino operators and travel companies rose more than 5%. Overall, the Dow Jones U.S. Travel & Leisure Index jumped 4.6% Friday and is up 17% so far this year.

The [U.S. is set to lift border restrictions](#) on Monday, adding to the travel demand. “When the U.S. announced that international visitors could come starting Nov. 8 if they’re vaccinated, that increased our bookings immediately,” Glenn Fogel, chief executive of online travel agency [Booking Holdings](#) Inc., said in an interview this week. Booking shares rose 7.5% Friday.

[Hyatt Hotels](#) Corp. , which [turned a profit](#) for the third quarter, expects revenue from short leisure stays at its Americas resorts to track 25% ahead of 2019 levels for the last weeks of December, CEO Mark Hoplamazian said. “At this pace, we anticipate the festive season could be one of the strongest we’ve ever experienced,” Mr. Hoplamazian said. Hyatt shares rose 3% on Friday.

A survey of about 6,500 people in September by Deloitte LLP found about four in 10 Americans plan to travel between Thanksgiving and early January.

Some leisure companies said they are seeing strong demand well into 2022. [Live Nation Entertainment](#) Inc. said it has more shows booked for next year than it did at this point in 2019 for 2020.

Cruise operators [Royal Caribbean Group](#) and [Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings](#) Ltd. , both of which suffered from more than yearlong hiatus in the U.S. before resuming sailings, said they expect to be profitable at some point in 2022.

“As cases have come down, demand has come surging back,” Royal Caribbean Group finance chief Jason Liberty said last week.

Candy Delgado, 64, said she and her husband went on a Disney cruise in the Caribbean this week. Ms. Delgado said she felt comfortable going on a cruise despite Covid-19 risks, as she had been vaccinated and the ship was operating at a lower occupancy.

“We’re pretty good at social distancing and practicing safe processes,” Ms. Delgado said.

Travel recovery, however, remains uneven across the world. Booking Holdings, which operates websites such as Priceline and Kayak, saw some improvement in the level of lodging bookings from international travel, but international room nights remain below 2019 levels, Mr. Fogel said.

Travel-search platform Trivago NV said it doesn’t expect a full rebound in travel over the winter because of uncertainty about the Covid-19 pandemic, and travel restrictions in Asia and Australia have hurt traffic volumes in its segment that covers the rest of the world.

But Trivago said it expects travel demand and behavior to approach pre-pandemic levels in the Americas and Europe in spring and early summer 2022, with a strong rebound in city and international travel. Trivago shares rose more than 15% Friday.

In China, recovery for hotel chain Marriott International Inc. has been choppy because of the country's Covid-zero policy, CEO Anthony Capuano said. China is adhering to its playbook of neighborhood lockdowns, location tracking, weekslong quarantines and indefinitely delayed visas, in an effort to eradicate every single case of the virus.

"Demand then fell significantly in August after the government imposed strict lockdowns in response to small regional Covid outbreaks," Mr. Capuano said. "Demand then swiftly rose again in September as soon as those restrictions were lifted." Marriott shares added 2.1% on Friday.

Companies said leisure travel has been the main force of recovery as the Delta variant weighed on business travel and companies' return-to-office plans. Marriott said continuing demand for leisure travel propelled gains in its recent quarter, while the spread of the Delta variant hurt parts of its business involving corporate travelers.

Some companies are seeing signs of business travel's return. The number of rides with Lyft Inc. to the airport nearly tripled in the third quarter from last year. Finance chief Brian Roberts said some of those airport rides could signal the beginning of corporate travel.

"We're beginning to see an uptick in business travel, but it's early," Mr. Roberts said. "And we expect that this will become more pronounced as more companies return to the office."

Amid rising demand, travel-related companies are looking to add staff. Hiring in the leisure and hospitality industries, which includes restaurants, drove U.S. job gains in October.

Hyatt is still working to fill thousands of open positions across the country, Mr. Hoplamazian said. And like other businesses, hotels are also absorbing the effects of inflation. Anecdotally, Hyatt has seen wage rates going up 10% to 20% depending on the location and category of labor, its CEO said.

"The labor market remains really tight," Mr. Hoplamazian said.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 States sue to stop Biden vaccine mandate</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/states-sue-to-stop-bidens-covid-19-vaccine-mandate-11636137439?mod=hp_lead_pos8">https://www.wsj.com/articles/states-sue-to-stop-bidens-covid-19-vaccine-mandate-11636137439?mod=hp_lead_pos8</a>
GIST	<p>More than half of U.S. states are suing to stop the Biden administration from implementing <a href="#">new rules</a> that require employers with more than 100 workers to ensure <a href="#">their employees are vaccinated against Covid-19</a> or get a weekly test.</p> <p>The states' attorneys general, who filed multiple lawsuits in various courts Friday, said they were suing because the federal government doesn't have the authority to issue the requirements. They say the issue should be left to states.</p> <p>"States have been leading the fight against COVID-19 from the start of the pandemic," Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat, said Friday. "It is too late to impose a federal standard now that we have already developed systems and strategies that are tailored for our specific needs."</p> <p>Kansas was one of three Democratic-led states, along with Kentucky and Louisiana, to join 23 Republican-led states in the lawsuits.</p> <p>A group of 11 states, including Missouri, Nebraska and New Hampshire, also said the requirements would hurt businesses and worsen the already tight job market.</p> <p>"This mandate is unconstitutional, unlawful, and unwise," the states said in their lawsuit, which was filed in the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in St. Louis.</p>

The Biden administration is confident the rules will withstand legal challenges, White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters Friday.

“The Department of Labor has a responsibility to keep workers safe and a legal responsibility to do so,” she said.

Under the new requirements released by the Labor Department on Thursday, employers that qualify have until Jan. 4 to make sure their workers are either vaccinated or produce a negative test weekly. Unvaccinated workers must also wear face masks at work.

Employers aren’t required to provide or pay for tests, with some exceptions if bargaining agreements compel them to do so. Employers who don’t adhere to the rules could face penalties of up to nearly \$14,000 per violation.

The White House has said the requirements, which cover more than 80 million workers, keep Americans from dying, will get more people back to work and help put an end to the pandemic.

Mr. Biden [first unveiled the requirements](#) in September. Another requirement that federal contractors mandate their workers are vaccinated for Covid-19 by Dec. 8 has [led to lawsuits](#) in several states.

Some large employers have had success with vaccine mandates. [United Airlines Holdings Inc.](#), which was [one of the first major U.S. companies](#) to mandate workers get the Covid-19 shot, has said nearly all its workers are now vaccinated.

Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt, who is coleading one of the lawsuits, said he wants to protect people’s personal freedoms as well as businesses in his state.

“Local business owners have told me that the vaccine mandate would decimate their businesses,” said Mr. Schmitt.

Missouri, Nebraska and New Hampshire were joined in the lawsuit by Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Iowa, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Other states that filed lawsuits Friday include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia.

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HEADLINE	11/06 Rise breakthrough cases hinder UK efforts
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/rising-covid-19-breakthrough-cases-hinder-efforts-to-control-virus-11636191003?mod=hp_lead_pos2">https://www.wsj.com/articles/rising-covid-19-breakthrough-cases-hinder-efforts-to-control-virus-11636191003?mod=hp_lead_pos2</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON—Covid-19 infections among vaccinated people are complicating the fight to bring the coronavirus under control. And in the U.K., where the path of the disease has been more closely tracked than just about anywhere in the world, they are on the rise.</p> <p>Breakthroughs happen because vaccines, while still offering strong protection against severe illness and death, aren’t bulletproof. The virus can still in some cases infect the body and replicate, causing illness, before the immune response can tackle it. Immunity from vaccination also wanes over time, prompting many countries, including the U.K., to <a href="#">roll out booster-shot campaigns</a>.</p> <p>Breakthrough infections are expected to become more common as more people get vaccinated: if 100% of the population were vaccinated, every infection would be a breakthrough infection. However, U.K. data also suggest that among vaccinated people, the chances of getting a breakthrough infection are rising.</p> <p>The rise in breakthroughs in the U.K. is being driven in part by children, still largely unvaccinated in the U.K., passing on the virus to their vaccinated parents. A detailed study on household transmission in the</p>

U.K. suggests that a vaccinated person who shares a home with somebody with symptomatic Covid-19 has a 25% chance of catching the virus.

In addition, breakthrough infections contribute to the spread of the virus, posing a risk to vulnerable and unvaccinated people. The household-transmission study also found that a vaccinated person with symptomatic Covid-19 is as likely to pass the virus on to someone who shares their home as an unvaccinated person.

Also contributing to [stubbornly high case numbers in the U.K.](#) are the tenaciousness of the fast-transmitting Delta variant and, some scientists say, the lack of social-distancing and other measures aimed at curbing transmission. Still, thanks to the vaccines, hospitalizations and deaths, while higher than in the summer when cases were low, are a fraction of what they were in previous phases of the pandemic.

“Breakthrough infections are not rare, and they’re not unexpected, and they’re not very concerning,” said Dan Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Mass.

In most age groups in England, breakthrough infections are higher now than they were in mid-August, according to data from the U.K. Health Security Agency, formerly Public Health England.

That rise has been especially stark in people in their 40s. In the four weeks to Oct. 31, 2.1% of fully vaccinated 40-to-49-year-olds tested positive for the virus. That is up around 90% from a four-week infection rate of 1.1% in mid-August. Other age groups have seen more modest increases—between 22% and 56%—in the rate of breakthrough infections. In under-30s, the rate is now lower than it was in mid-August.

Ajit Lalvani, chair of infectious diseases at Imperial College London and lead author of the household-transmission study, said people in their 40s were at higher risk of breakthrough infection for two reasons. “Waning immunity plus pools of unvaccinated people acting as vectors of infection into the household where it transmits effectively to vaccinated parents,” he said. “Both are happening.”

Most people in their 40s received their second vaccination at least four months ago. A recent study from UKHSA found that vaccine effectiveness started to wane as early as 10 weeks after the second dose for the vaccines developed both by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, and by AstraZeneca PLC and the University of Oxford, the two most commonly used in Britain. Protection against symptomatic disease peaked in the early weeks after the second dose then faded over a five-month period, to 69.7% and 47.3% respectively. The study hasn’t been peer-reviewed.

They are also the most-likely age band to share a home with teenage children, a group that [is still mostly unvaccinated](#) in the U.K. and in which case numbers have been surging. The household-transmission study, which tracked 205 vaccinated and unvaccinated household contacts of a symptomatic case of Covid-19, found that around a quarter of those who were fully vaccinated went on to develop a breakthrough infection. The study, published in the medical journal *Lancet Infectious Diseases* last week, found that unvaccinated household members had a 38% chance of infection.

Yet the four-week death rate from breakthrough infections in 40-to-49-year-olds has remained low and is currently at seven in a million. Death rates from breakthrough infections have crept up, however, in those ages 60 and over. These older age groups were more vulnerable to begin with and were also vaccinated early in the year, making it more likely that their immunity has waned. The U.K. in September started offering booster shots to people 50 and older.

Several studies have shown that in people who do suffer a breakthrough infection, vaccination doesn’t diminish the peak viral load but it does help the body to clear infection more quickly. “That helps to explain why vaccinated people, even when infected, get fewer symptoms, quicker resolution of their symptoms and less risk of developing severe disease,” said Imperial’s Prof. Lalvani, whose study corroborated this finding.

	<p>Official data released on Monday from the U.K.'s Office for National Statistics further underscored the benefit of vaccination in warding off the worst effects of the virus.</p> <p>Based on deaths between Jan. 2 and Sept. 24 this year, the ONS calculated that 849.7 out of every 100,000 unvaccinated people would die annually from Covid-19. For fully vaccinated people, the figure is just 26.2 per 100,000. The calculation is age-standardized, an established statistical technique that aims to compensate for the older age profiles of the vaccinated compared with the unvaccinated population.</p> <p>That difference is likely exaggerated somewhat by the fact that the unvaccinated include people in older age groups who decline a shot because of their already poor health, according to James Doidge, senior statistician at the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre.</p> <p>While they rarely lead to serious illness, breakthrough infections can be very unpleasant. Sarah Davies, a 39-year-old assistant professor of biology, spent two weeks feeling feverish, achy and tired after contracting the virus. Sometimes she was breathless, and she also lost her sense of smell.</p> <p>"It was really relentless," said Mrs. Davies, who lives in Boston, Mass. "I cannot imagine how sick I would have been if I hadn't been vaccinated."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/06 Houston music festival crowd surge kills 8</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/houston-astroworld-festival.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/houston-astroworld-festival.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>At least eight people were killed and dozens more were injured at a music festival in Houston on Friday night after a large crowd "began to compress towards the front of the stage," the city's fire chief said at a news conference.</p> <p>The crowd surge, during a concert by the rapper Travis Scott, "caused some panic, and it started causing some injuries," said the fire chief, Samuel Peña. The concert was part of a two-day music festival that began on Friday.</p> <p>Twenty-three people were taken to nearby hospitals by emergency responders, Chief Peña said, adding that of those patients, 11 were in cardiac arrest. Over 300 people were treated at a "field hospital" at the site, he said.</p> <p>The exact causes of death will be determined by the medical examiner, who is investigating the incident, Chief Peña said.</p> <p>About 50,000 people were attending the festival on Friday night, according to the fire department. Chief Troy Finner of the Houston Police Department said that many details about the disaster were still unclear, including what had caused the crowd to surge forward.</p> <p>"I'm sending investigators to the hospitals because we just don't know," Chief Finner said. "We're going to do an investigation and find out, because it's not fair to producers, to anybody else involved, until we determine what happened, what caused the surge."</p> <p>"It happened all at once," Larry Satterwhite, the executive assistant chief of the Houston police, said at the news conference. He said that at one point, several people in the crowd fell to the ground and began experiencing a medical episode. The concert's organizer, Live Nation, agreed to stop the concert early in the interest of public safety, Chief Satterwhite said.</p> <p>Investigators said that they had not yet reviewed video from the concert but that Live Nation had promised them access to it.</p>



	<p>Officials said that there had been an earlier crowd surge at the entrance to the concert, but that it seemed to be unrelated to the chaotic events that unfolded later.</p> <p>“Our hearts are broken,” Judge Lina Hidalgo of Harris County, which includes Houston, said at the news conference. “People go to these events looking for a good time,” she said, adding, “It’s not the kind of event where you expect to find out about fatalities.”</p> <p>The two-day event, called the Astroworld festival, was started in 2018 by Mr. Scott, who is from Houston and who named it after a best-selling album he released that year. The lineup for this year’s festival included Roddy Ricch, Tame Impala, Earth Wind &amp; Fire and Yves Tumor, among others. Chief Peña said the second day of the festival had been canceled.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Ethiopia residents: PM tactics stoked war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/05/we-are-living-in-terror-ethiopians-say-pms-abiy-ahmed-tactics-have-stoked-war">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/05/we-are-living-in-terror-ethiopians-say-pms-abiy-ahmed-tactics-have-stoked-war</a>
GIST	<p>Addis Ababa was its usual bustling self a year ago. Events were taking place day and night in the Ethiopian capital; bars and restaurants were filled with visitors from other African countries where stricter anti-Covid measures had been put in place.</p> <p>Now all that has changed. A year to the week since the prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, ordered military operations to commence in the northern region of Tigray, a slow deterioration in security and living standards has worsened.</p> <p>Events have moved quickly. Over the weekend, Tigrayan forces seized two towns on the main road heading south to the capital. Abiy, unnerved by the development, urged citizens to take up arms. On Tuesday, he declared a nationwide state of emergency, granting him sweeping powers of detention, and authorities in Addis Ababa told residents to register their arms and prepare to defend their neighbourhoods.</p> <p>By Thursday, security agents were going door to door in Tigrayan-majority areas and detaining people, and the city’s mayor, Adanech Abebe, said she was dispatching thousands of young people to the frontlines.</p> <p>Already worn down by a sharp rise in living costs and long queues for fuel, most residents the Guardian spoke to in Addis Ababa blamed Abiy for the worsening crisis.</p> <p>“We have lived through the terrors of TPLF for almost 30 years,” said Taye, in reference to the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, which used to dominate Ethiopia’s governing coalition. “No one wants them to come to the centre and rule again. But now we are living in another terror, caused by a leader who miscalculated every move he’s made since the beginning of the war.</p> <p>“I was on the streets waving my country’s flag when we celebrated Abiy’s election victory. I believed that he would break the cycle [of violence] and that my generation would not have to go through what our families experienced. But here we are repeating history. Our chance for salvation died when Abiy decided to shoot at the enemy rather than be the bigger man we thought he was and find another solution. I don’t see another deliverance for Ethiopia – may Jesus help us out of this tragedy.”</p> <p>Some spoke of relatives caught up in brutal fighting on the frontlines of the conflict. Yemisrach, who, like others the Guardian spoke to, did not want to give her full name, said her mother and other civilians had been killed by heavy artillery fired by the Ethiopian army in a small town near Hayk. Tigrayan forces had captured the area around her family’s property then retreated before the firing started, Yemisrach said.</p>



	<p>“The army doesn’t have accurate intelligence and is not willing to listen to genuine information given to them by the locals, which is why there are casualties,” she said. “We are worried sick about our families and the Tigrayan forces’ quick territorial gains.”</p> <p>Since the state of emergency was declared, long queues of cars have formed at random security checkpoints across the city. Some are panic-buying groceries in anticipation of further advances by Tigrayan forces.</p> <p>An accountant in the city said she expected shortages on goods to get worse. “It is not only because I think the TPLF forces will march to Addis, but also because they control most of the entry points for supplies from all over the country,” she said. “I am buying foods that are not liable to rot like rice, flour, pasta, tomato paste with long shelf lives.”</p> <p>Another resident questioned the government and the military’s tactics. “The next few days are crucial for the survival of our people. Where are the Ethiopian national defence forces? Untrained young people are dying on the frontlines, people in Afar and Amhara are fighting for their survival and now those in the towns near the capital are sharing the same fate. What is this government waiting for? Mobilising untrained young people will not win the war.”</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/05 World first: Denver zoo hyenas catch Covid</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/06/hyenas-at-denver-zoo-catch-covid-in-world-first">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/06/hyenas-at-denver-zoo-catch-covid-in-world-first</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Two hyenas at the <a href="#">Denver</a> zoo have tested positive for Covid-19, the first confirmed cases among the animals worldwide.</p> <p>Samples from a variety of animals at the zoo, including the spotted hyenas, were tested after several of its lions became ill, according to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). The hyena samples tested presumptive positive at a lab at Colorado State University and were confirmed by the national lab.</p> <p>In addition to the two hyenas, 11 lions and two tigers at the zoo tested positive.</p> <p>“Hyenas are famously tough, resilient animals that are known to be highly tolerant to anthrax, rabies and distemper. They are otherwise healthy and expected to make a full recovery,” the zoo said in a statement.</p> <p>Zoo officials said the hyenas – 22-year-old Ngozi and 23-year-old Kibo – had mild symptoms including slight lethargy, some nasal discharge and a cough.</p> <p>The other animals that tested positive in recent weeks had either fully recovered or were on the path to a full recovery.</p> <p>“We now know that many other species may be susceptible to Covid-19 based on multiple reports, and we continue to use the highest level of care and precaution when working with all of our 3,000 animals and 450 different species,” the zoo said.</p> <p>Infections have been reported in multiple species worldwide, mostly in animals that had close contact with a person infected with Covid-19, according to the US Department of Agriculture, which oversees the NVSL. It said on Friday that scientists were still learning about coronavirus infections in animals but based on the information available the risk of animals spreading the virus to people was low.</p> <p>People with Covid-19 should avoid close contact with animals, including pets, to protect them from possible infection, it said.</p> <p>The NVSL serves as an international reference lab, providing testing for foreign and emerging animal diseases, as well as offering guidance on diagnostic techniques.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 China: Taiwan backers blacklisted for life</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/06/china-regime-says-taiwan-independence-backers-will-be-blacklisted">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/06/china-regime-says-taiwan-independence-backers-will-be-blacklisted</a>
GIST	<p>China has said it will hold those who support “Taiwan independence” criminally liable for life, provoking anger and ridicule from the island at a time of heightened tension between the neighbours.</p> <p>For the first time, China has spelled out the punishment that awaits people deemed to back independence for Taiwan – top officials of the self-ruled island among them.</p> <p>China has not ruled out using force to bring Taiwan under its control, despite the island operating as an independent country, and its government vowing to defend its freedom and democracy.</p> <p>China’s Taiwan Affairs office has named the island’s premier, Su Tseng-chang, the parliamentary speaker, You Si-kun, and the foreign minister, Joseph Wu, as being “stubbornly pro-Taiwan independence“, as it made public for the first time that it had drawn up a list of those falling into the category.</p> <p>China would enforce punishment for those on the list by not letting them enter the mainland and special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, spokeswoman Zhu Fenglian said on Friday. Such blacklisted individuals would not be allowed to cooperate with entities or people from the mainland, nor their companies or entities that fund them be allowed to profit from the mainland.</p> <p>Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council admonished China, saying Taiwan was a democratic society with rule of law and not ruled by Beijing.</p> <p>Taiwanese military helicopters rehearsing for the island’s national day celebrations near Taipei, amid growing military threats from China.</p> <p>“We do not accept intimidation and threats from an autocratic and authoritarian region,” the council said, adding that it would take the “necessary countermeasures to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of the people”.</p> <p>In a Twitter post on Saturday, Wu wrote: “I’ve received countless notes of congratulations after being blacklisted and sanctioned, for life, by the #CCP”, referring to the Chinese Communist party.</p> <p>“Many are jealous for not being recognised; some ask where they can apply for it. To deserve the rare honour, I’ll keep fighting for #Taiwan’s freedom and democracy.”</p> <p>China says Taiwan’s president, Tsai Ing-wen, is a separatist bent on declaring formal independence. Tsai says Taiwan is already an independent country called the Republic of China.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Firms skimp on services as prices rise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/nov/06/skimpflation-us-consumers-firms-prices-rise">https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/nov/06/skimpflation-us-consumers-firms-prices-rise</a>
GIST	<p>“Flight cancelled”; “service temporarily suspended”; “not currently available”; “longer than normal wait times”: these are the messages that confront US consumers daily as the economy struggles to find a post pandemic footing. Now the phenomenon has a name: “skimpflation”.</p> <p>It’s a simple in concept – struggling with shortages of workers and goods, companies are skimping on what they offer consumers while, in many cases, charging the same price or more for that service.</p> <p>But skimpflation may have profound consequences, and may even go some way to account for rising the rising tide consumer of dissatisfaction seen in increasing air rage incidents and even the Biden administration’s plummeting poll numbers.</p>

Skimpflation is everywhere. Last weekend, American Airlines cancelled upwards of 2,000 flights, leaving thousands stranded, as a single weather event (high winds in Dallas) threw the carrier's rotas of pilots and flight attendants, already in short supply, into chaos. But passengers weren't the only ones affected. Crews found themselves having to work double shifts or stuck far from home at the end of work.

All of this, says Alan Cole, a writer at [Full Stack Economics](#) and formerly a senior economist at the joint economic committee of the US Congress, is part and parcel of the skimpflation, a sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, sense among consumers that they are getting less for their money, worker unhappiness with consumers and employers, employers' unhappiness with restive workers. It's an economic force that leaves everyone feeling they are getting the bad end of the transaction.

"Nothing prepared us for how much life has gotten worse," Cole told the Guardian. "Most of these factors haven't been picked up on by [the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). We thought these changes to products were going to be temporary, so it was reasonable not to account for the changes. But now everything has got worse all at the same time, so even if you tried to account for them, you probably couldn't."

Even if skimpflation cannot be measured conveniently, consumers have certainly noticed that the quality of service seems to be deteriorating everywhere. Consumer [satisfaction](#) indices are trending down, as they have been since before the onset of the pandemic, while [consumer confidence](#) was mildly better last month after dropping over the summer.

At the same time, exit polls from the upset in the Virginia governors race this week showed that one-third of voters [registered the economy](#) as their chief concern. With the job market still 7 million workers down from pre-pandemic employment levels, inflation running at a 30-year high, and worker dissatisfaction triggering a mass resignation, circumstances could get worse.

As National Public Radio noted last week, Domino's is [taking longer](#) to deliver pizzas; airlines are putting call-in customers [on hold](#) for hours, and restaurants, bars and hotels are [understaffed](#).

And that's before the holiday season, when yet more Americans are likely to run into examples of skimpflation in travel, present buying and entertainment.

In a September column, Cole confessed to becoming "an inflation crank" after he stayed at an upscale hotel. "The breakfast was comically unimpressive: little more than some individual cereal boxes, a limited assortment of poorly cooled beverages, and paper dishware," he wrote. Some of these degradations come, he argues, with a plausible Covid-19 justification but they are also down to companies reducing labor costs.

In economic terms, the balance of power between supply and demand may have shifted post-pandemic. Cole reasons that consumers had become accustomed to a slick services culture and cheaper goods that are harder to support with the rollback of globalization triggered by the supply chain issues affecting western consumer economies. Employers had become used to having the upper hand with workers keen to keep their jobs and buy those cheap goods and services.

"That has unwound," he says.

Successive rounds of stimulus cash from Washington flushed money into the economy at a time when capacity was constrained by Covid. Now that the pandemic is (hopefully) waning those consumers have cash to spend and workers have more job opportunities. "So now we're seeing the opposite balance of power, especially if you have a house to sell or you're a worker in the food service industry," Cole says.

To the consumer, who are sensitive to losses of services and generally take improvements for granted, the effects of skimpflation can be traumatic.

	<p>“We expect civilizational progress, but this was an unusual case of a new development affecting the real economy that was obviously negative,” Cole says. The new world is still one of masks and vaccine mandates, workers remain anxious about Covid, and fear – and its close cousin anger – is everywhere.</p> <p>A small business owner offering more money or flexible working conditions is likely to feel that workers who don’t show up are being unreasonable. But workers are, conversely, likely to feel that they’re being endangered at worst or inconvenienced at best.</p> <p>“There are lots of non-wage dimensions to jobs and normally they’re not that big of a deal,” says Cole. “Now they’re all being renegotiated, with new conveniences and inconveniences to be argued about. That raises the transactions costs on both sides. So it’s possible for both sides to feel they’ve made sacrifices and to feel unhappy about the situation. But it’s really not one or the other, it’s just that the world has got worse.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Puget Sound housing market tight till 2022</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/realestate/article/puget-sound-housing-inventory-limited-until-2022-16595595.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/realestate/article/puget-sound-housing-inventory-limited-until-2022-16595595.php</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Puget Sound</a> housing inventory remains tight heading into fall and could remain limited until next spring, putting more strain on buyers looking to break into the region's red-hot <a href="#">real estate</a> market.</p> <p>A new report from the Northwest Multiple Listing Service (NWMLS) found that the region saw slower listing and sales activity in October, suggesting a slight seasonal slowdown. While a reprieve for buyers was expected heading into the fall months, brokers also reported sensing some "buyer hesitancy" as more local companies <a href="#">waver on a return to in-person work</a>.</p> <p>"While the overall slowdown in the market is seasonal and can be attributed to people being priced out of the market, as well as a slight uptick in interest rates, supply chain issues experienced with construction materials late this summer are beginning to normalize," said John Deely, executive vice president of operations at Coldwell Banker Bain, in a <a href="#">news release</a> Thursday.</p> <p>New listings in the region shrunk by 19% in October compared to the previous month which saw <a href="#">"frenzied" levels of activity</a>. At the end of October, there were only 6,588 active listings, representing the smallest inventory selection since June.</p> <p>Across all 26 Washington counties surveyed in the report, there is only 0.66 months of inventory, down slightly from 0.75 last month. The agency has not seen more than a one month supply in inventory since July 2020 when it reached 1.04 months. However, four Washington counties do currently have over two months of supply: San Juan, Okanogan, Adams and Ferry.</p> <p>The median sale price for both single-family homes and condos in the region last month was \$575,000, up \$75,000 from a year ago. While many counties have experienced double-digit gains in prices, some areas of King County are seeing slower rates of growth. Last month, Seattle saw a 5.3% gain in median sale price while prices on Vashon jumped 33% compared to last year. Experts pointed to a slow return to in-person work in urban cores to explain the discrepancy in prices and change in demand.</p> <p>"The trends provide a mixed message as to whether demand will return to the cities as quickly as anticipated," said James Young, director of the Washington Center for Real Estate Research at the University of Washington. "With millennials looking for value and increased opportunities to purchase a home in the suburbs, it could be an interesting few months as to whether the lifestyle of the city and employers can change the balance of demand back to the city."</p> <p>Although a recent survey from Zillow found that homebuyers over the age of 60 were outpacing millennial buyers nationally, a closer look at statistics in Seattle shows that <a href="#">almost half of homebuyers in Seattle were between the ages of 18 and 39</a> while only 17% were 60 and older.</p>

	<p>The market for condominiums has continued to stabilize over the last several months following pandemic lows that saw <a href="#">price reductions in dense urban areas</a> like downtown Seattle. Condo inventory still remains historically low with listings down 55% in October compared to the same time last year.</p> <p>Priced out of buying a single-family home, NWMLS brokers said it is likely that more residential buyers are turning to condominiums, leading to a strong increase in demand in that market. The median sale price for a condo in King County last month was \$475,000, up only a modest 3.3% from the previous year.</p> <p>Experts continued to wane on whether the market would see more seasonal slowdowns, although some believe that supply will remain limited in the region until spring 2022.</p> <p>"A home listed now will have higher viewership since the buyer pool has not gone down," said Frank Wilson, branch managing broker at John L. Scott Real Estate. "With the pace of this market, a correctly priced home offered now would probably be off the market by Thanksgiving, allowing the seller to have a quiet holiday."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 FAA begins drone tests to protect airports</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/FAA-first-ever-drone-tests-to-protect-airports-16595999.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/FAA-first-ever-drone-tests-to-protect-airports-16595999.php</a>
GIST	<p>The black, four-blade drone sped toward the airfield at the Atlantic City International Airport in New Jersey Thursday, flying over the fence toward the runway and right past the "No Drone Zone" sign, coming within sight – and seconds – of a commercial jet taxing toward its gate.</p> <p>In a first, the drone had already been spotted – not by the passengers, but by the Federal Aviation Administration.</p> <p>"The red dots," Mike DiPilato, the FAA test director, explained as he pointed to a screen inside the trailer command center tracking the drone, was how "you can see it's moving."</p> <p>"Now it is over the fence line."</p> <p><b>New effort to protect airports</b>  The six distinct drone detection tests at three locations conducted at this airport within the span of a few hours Thursday marked a new effort to protect America's airports, passengers, and crews from wayward or malicious drones, known formally as unmanned aerial systems (UAS).</p> <p>No member of the public or any journalist has seen this FAA initiative until now, when the agency invited the Hearst Television National Investigative Unit to observe a brisk series of exercises.</p> <p>Jim Patterson is leading the FAA's research and testing of drone detection—and by next summer, drone mitigation – technology from about a dozen companies. Their names are not being disclosed at this stage of the process.</p> <p>"We understand the threat," Patterson said. "We are going to fully understand these systems and be able to make a confident decision that they're safe for the airport environment."</p> <p><b>Drone sightings spike</b>  The threat is real. Drone sightings near U.S. airports or aircraft have reached nearly the entire total from 2020 in just the first six months of this year, according to publicly available <a href="#">FAA data</a>.</p> <p>And yet, the FAA has <a href="#">repeatedly warned</a> airports that federal law, for now, does not allow them to buy their own drone defense systems.</p> <p>Leesa Papier, executive director of the FAA's National Security Programs and Incident Response section, is in charge of writing the rule that will one-day allow those systems nationwide.</p>

"We're being very deliberate and methodical about our approach to this," Papier said, "because as we move forward in regulatory action, we want to make sure that we are as clear as we could possibly be to make sure that we help the airports, but at the same time, we do no additional harm."

When asked by a correspondent if she would acknowledge that many airports say they can't get drone detection and mitigation technology fast enough, Papier answered: "I do recognize that."

With new urgency, the first-of-their-kind tests will soon [expand](#) to a total of five commercial airports across the country, adding those in **Washington (SEA-TAC Airport)**, Ohio, Alabama and New York, a process that began with a [solicitation](#) for airport hosts.

But those phases of the research and testing, spearheaded from the [FAA Technical Center](#) adjacent to the Atlantic City airport, are expected to last for another 18 months, putting a national rule for airports to follow – and the prospect of securing drone spotting and defense technology – even further beyond that. In an interview on the airfield after observing the initial testing, Papier would not commit to a specific timeline.

"We do not have a date at this point in time," she said. "We're being very safe, very deliberate."

Airports 'completely blind'

The agency is taking that deliberate approach, Papier says, so that any technology that meets the eventual FAA rule does not interfere with complicated systems on planes or at airports.

But the wait has its own risks.

Two years ago, the Hearst Television National Investigative Unit [revealed](#) new technology seeking to counter drone attacks, whether near the Super Bowl, against the U.S. military, or at airports.

The then-director of the San Luis Obispo Airport on the California coast, Kevin Bumen, said in an interview [in 2019](#) that his airport, like nearly all the ones in the country, are without drone defense technology, a gap that left his commercial airfield "completely blind."

The director of the airport in Atlantic City where the FAA research testing occurred this week, Tim Kroll, agreed with Bumen. "We absolutely do need that technology. It's critical for safety and security of the airport," Kroll said.

Drone attacks pose growing threat

Attacks have already been launched against American troops overseas. The defense department [says](#) a drone attack struck a U.S. position in Syria just last month.

Michael Chertoff, secretary of the Department of Homeland Security under Pres. George W. Bush, warned in an interview the country should "buckle up; you're going to see" UAS attacks on American soil.

"Look at some laws that perhaps in their current application are a little bit antiquated and revise them to take account of new technologies," Chertoff said. "Because otherwise we're going to wind up with drone attacks."

That is one of the drone-related problems the FAA is facing – and, it says, trying to solve.

Jim Patterson, the FAA official overseeing the research and testing now underway, explained a "new era" is taking off to meet the incoming threat.

"It's critical that we make sure we understand these technologies and how they behave," Patterson said.



HEADLINE	<b>11/05 DOH: 737,698 cases, 8798 deaths</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/coronavirus/article255589766.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/coronavirus/article255589766.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Washington state Department of Health reported 1,845 new COVID-19 cases and 31 new deaths on Friday.</p> <p>Statewide totals from the illness caused by the coronavirus are 737,698 and 8,798 deaths. Those numbers are up from 733,535 and 8,727 deaths as of Wednesday. The case total includes 87,396 infections listed as probable. DOH revises previous case and death counts daily.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 ESD clears large backlog of jobless claims</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/state-cuts-backlog-of-delayed-jobless-claims-and-fixes-some-system-bugs/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/state-cuts-backlog-of-delayed-jobless-claims-and-fixes-some-system-bugs/</a>
GIST	<p>Nearly a year and a half after Washington was hammered by a wave of pandemic layoffs, state officials say they've cleared a large backlog of unpaid unemployment claims and fixed some of the bugs that caused the delays in the first place.</p> <p>The state Employment Security Department (ESD) has resolved all but a handful of the tens of thousands of jobless claims that were stalled at the agency as of early June, an agency official said Friday afternoon.</p> <p>A second, more recent group of claimants with delayed benefits payments has been reduced from around 10,000 to just under 5,200, said ESD spokesman Nick Demerice.</p> <p>ESD provided the updates shortly after a meeting with Northwest Justice Project, a Seattle-based organization that sued the agency last year <a href="#">over delays in paying jobless benefits</a>. Under a settlement approved last week, ESD had agreed to resolve the June 1 backlog of claims by Nov. 15.</p> <p>"Progress has been made," said Jefferson Coulter, an attorney with Northwest Justice Project.</p> <p>ESD also agreed to address problems in its claims processing system, including claimant notifications that were often confusing or left claimants with little recourse.</p> <p>For example, while claimants who are denied benefits by the agency can appeal the decision, some claimants received letters from ESD saying their benefits had been determined to be \$0, which "would prevent us from being able to appeal to do anything about it," Coulter said.</p> <p>Demerice said claimants receive those notices if they're found to be eligible for unemployment yet lack enough work hours in their preceding "base" year to currently qualify for benefits. "A lot of this happened in those first few months of the pandemic, and they were very confusing for folks," said Demerice.</p> <p>The agency is going to reword those notifications "so that claimants will have a better sense of what to do when they get that \$0 determination," Demerice said.</p> <p>The settlement pointed to roughly 102,000 claims "issues" that ESD had flagged as of June 1 related to questions about claimants' identity, problems in how claimants had applied for benefits or disputes over claimants' benefit amounts.</p> <p>But a single claim can be flagged with multiple issues, Demerice said. He said he didn't have a figure Friday for how many separate individuals had been caught up in the June 1 backlog or how many hadn't been paid because of the claims issues, but added that it was well below 102,000.</p> <p>Northwest Justice Project filed the lawsuit in June 2020 in Thurston County Superior on behalf of six claimants whose benefits had been delayed. It was one of several legal actions against ESD as the agency struggled with hundreds of thousands of new unemployment claims from the pandemic and a massive unemployment scam that siphoned off \$650 million in benefits.</p>



ESD was also sued by the Seattle- and Spokane-based Unemployment Law Project, which represents people appealing their claims.

ESD also came [under heavy pressure from state lawmakers](#), who ultimately passed [legislation](#) directing the agency to improve its processing systems, report its progress to lawmakers, and post monthly reports on payment delays and other claims data on its website. Those updates are now available.

In a statement, ESD said the settlement with the Northwest Justice Project “affirms the improvements we’ve made so far and identifies opportunities to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders. We look forward to collaborating with them in service to Washington workers.”

Coulter lauded ESD’s efforts at resolving the backlog and addressing other issues. He said the agency had been testing its communications for clarity with groups of volunteers and also had agreed to have those communications reviewed by Northwest Justice Project and Unemployment Law Project.

“They’ve been working in really good faith with us for the last year or so,” Coulter said.

Still, he said, getting the agency to address the problems with “what we think is pretty common sense improvements” had required pressure from lawmakers as well as the threat of continued legal action.

“We tried to figure out a way to resolve this without a lawsuit,” Coulter said, adding that “the uncertainty of how a judge was going to rule against them was motivating.”

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 SEA N Concourse construction completed</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/life/travel/seattle-tacoma-airport-completes-construction-of-north-concourse-just-in-time-for-an-anticipated-travel-spike/">https://www.seattletimes.com/life/travel/seattle-tacoma-airport-completes-construction-of-north-concourse-just-in-time-for-an-anticipated-travel-spike/</a>
GIST	<p>On Thursday, just days before the U.S. opens its borders to vaccinated international travelers on Nov. 8, the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport celebrated the end of major construction in its North Satellite Modernization Project.</p> <p>The North Satellite building is nearly 50 years old, and the estimated \$710 million renovation that began in 2017 includes significant seismic upgrades, 20 gates (8 new, 12 remodeled) and some sustainability features: captured rainwater to flush toilets, around \$21 million of recycled construction materials used in the project, and renewable natural gas, a lower-carbon alternative to traditional natural gas often produced from landfill waste.</p> <p>The north concourse has also leaned into Pacific Northwest aesthetics, with an emphasis on large windows and natural lighting, some regional dining options (Skillet, Bambuza Vietnam Kitchen) and artists known for their work with natural materials, including a life-sized, abstracted sculpture of a Western Red Cedar’s root structure by John Grade.</p> <p>For months, U.S. travelers have been able to fly overseas from the airport, but on Monday the U.S. will <a href="#">lift the 18-month restrictions</a> that have walled off international travelers from entering the U.S. Foreign nationals flying into the U.S. will need to show proof of vaccination and a negative COVID test (either PCR or viral) taken within the past 72 hours; unvaccinated U.S. travelers returning to the U.S. must show proof of a negative COVID test taken within 24 hours of departure. Foreign visitors crossing the land borders from Canada and Mexico must show proof of vaccination, but no test result is required. The lifting of travel restrictions, a recent lull in pandemic numbers and the completion of the North Concourse come just as the airport gears up for what will likely be a busy holiday travel season. More details are <a href="#">available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</a>.</p> <p>At a Thursday evening Travel Trends event to celebrate the reopening of the North Satellite, hospitality and travel-industry experts said they were already seeing surges of travelers, and looked forward to more.</p>

	<p>“We’re so ready,” said Matt Hagerman, executive vice president of Columbia Hospitality, a Seattle-based company that owns resorts, hotels, golf courses and other properties around the U.S. “For months, we had no customers — closed restaurants, empty hotels — so there’s a new appreciation for guests.”</p> <p>Kevin Lemme, an executive at Alaska Airlines, said flights are already brimming. “Right now, our capacity is 50% of 2019 levels,” he said, “but our bookings are only down 10%.”</p> <p>Those who are traveling are tending to travel big — fulfilling the “revenge travel” prophecy industry trackers started discussing months ago.</p> <p>“One-third of our travelers are increasing the star ratings for their hotels — they were going to three-star hotels and now they’re staying in four-star hotels,” said Nissy Atassi, senior director of global communications for Expedia. “2022 will be the year of the GOAT trip, ‘the greatest trip of all time.’”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Seattle criticizes ad-hoc camp cleanup</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/project-seattle/we-heart-seattle-volunteers-criticized-for-trash-picking-efforts-at-homeless-camps">https://komonews.com/news/project-seattle/we-heart-seattle-volunteers-criticized-for-trash-picking-efforts-at-homeless-camps</a>
GIST	<p>For the past year, Andrea Suarez said We Heart Seattle’s volunteers have made the distinction between personal belongs and trash.</p> <p>“I would not go inside someone’s tent to pick this up,” Suarez said.</p> <p>Her homeless outreach group has always asked campers for permission before clearing garbage at encampments across the city, like the one on Shilshole Avenue in Ballard. But Suarez said last week, Seattle City Councilmember Dan Strauss invited her on to a ZOOM call, then criticized her efforts.</p> <p>“Sadly I was ambushed by many city agencies,” Suarez said.</p> <p>She said officials from Seattle Parks and Recreation, Public Utilities, The Human Services Department, the HOPE team and REACH all asked her to stand down.</p> <p>“They said we have it handled do not come back,” Suarez said. “Do not come back.”</p> <p>Suarez said no one on the call told her why they were bringing up these concerns now. But said they emphasized a clean up plan was already in place.</p> <p>"City staff organized the meeting to better create a coordinated response for the people living unsheltered in Ballard," said Chloe Gale, REACH director.</p> <p>The Mayor’s office sent us a statement that reads in part: “It is important to remember that staff who work in and around encampments are highly trained in safety procedures in handling debris, needles, and hazardous materials. This is not work that the city encourages volunteers to take on.”</p> <p>“Ad-hoc outreach can cause confusion, making it more difficult to move people inside,” Strauss said.</p> <p>But Doug Dixon with Pacific Fishermen Shipyard said most businesses in Ballard welcome the group’s on going efforts.</p> <p>“A stand down at this point makes no sense,” Dixon said.</p> <p>Critics have slammed “We Heart’s” tactics in the past. A volunteer had to apologize for accidentally going into a tent without permission, thinking it was empty.</p>

	Suarez said lessons have been learned and points out it is not illegal for average citizens to help clean up public property.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 WSDOT staff shortages impact services</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/wsdot-staffing-shortages-to-cause-longer-road-closures-minimal-plowing-on-passes-this-winter">https://www.q13fox.com/news/wsdot-staffing-shortages-to-cause-longer-road-closures-minimal-plowing-on-passes-this-winter</a>
GIST	<p><b>SNOQUALMIE PASS, Wash.</b> - With snow predicted for the mountain passes over the weekend, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is warning drivers that commutes over the passes will be different this year.</p> <p>Citing staff shortages due to retirement, the pandemic and other factors, crews will be shifting priorities for plowing and road closures.</p> <p>In October, 5.9% of WSDOT staff left the agency due to the state vaccine mandate, which impacted already-low winter operations numbers, WSDOT reported.</p> <p>"Safety is always our top priority – for those of you traveling and our employees. Our dedicated crews will absolutely still be out on the roadways, plowing during and after storms as well as preparing and, in some cases, pre-treating roadways before storms," WSDOT said.</p> <p>WSDOT said it will prioritize work based on safety, resources and <a href="#">pre-existing plowing priority maps</a> based on volume and/or critical roads.</p> <p>WSDOT says this what drivers can expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some roads and passes will be closed longer than normal during and after significant storms.</li> <li>• Some roads will not get the same level of service, may be only plowed minimally or will have snow and ice on the roadway for longer periods of time.</li> <li>• Some areas may not be staffed 24/7.</li> <li>• Especially during large storms or long-lasting ones, we won't have a deep enough "bench" of staff to respond 24/7 for several days throughout the storm.</li> <li>• Some lanes of the freeway system may have snow and ice while crews focus on keeping just one or two lanes open.</li> <li>• Lower speed limits in areas with variable speed limits.</li> <li>• There may be slower responses to crashes and other emergencies, and it may take longer to clear major crashes or slide-offs.</li> <li>• Less attention to secondary routes and recreation areas as crews focus on higher priority roadways.</li> </ul> <p>Make sure you give yourself extra time while driving across the passes, and make sure you're driving slower if there's snow or ice on the roads and give extra space between you and the car in front of you.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Detention center firm halts work program</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/company-contracting-with-tacoma-detention-center-halts-work-program-instead-of-upping-detainee-pay">https://www.q13fox.com/news/company-contracting-with-tacoma-detention-center-halts-work-program-instead-of-upping-detainee-pay</a>
GIST	<p><b>TACOMA, Wash.</b> - Brazilian Jose Soares has been locked up in one of the United States' largest immigration detention centers for the past two years, passing much of his time cleaning bathrooms and buffing floors at a rate of \$1 a day.</p> <p>But last week, a <a href="#">federal jury ruled</a> that Soares and other detainees who cook, clean, do laundry and cut hair at the for-profit lockup in Tacoma were entitled to Washington's minimum wage, \$13.69 an hour. The multibillion-dollar company that owns the <a href="#">jail was ordered to pay more than \$23 million in back pay and unjust profits</a> to current and former detainees and to Washington state.</p>

The guards, Soares said, then delivered a message: No more cleaning.

Rather than pay the detainees minimum wage, the Florida-based GEO Group suspended the Voluntary Work Program while it appeals.

Neither the company nor U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which contracts it to house the detainees, would answer questions from The Associated Press this week about the suspension.

Soares, two other detainees and activists who monitor the facility south of Seattle told the AP that much of the sanitation work they used to perform is no longer being done regularly.

"It got really gross — nobody cleaned anything," Ivan Sanchez, a 34-year-old detainee from Jalisco, Mexico, said in a phone interview from the jail. "We pick up after ourselves, but nobody sweeps or mops. The guards were saying it wasn't their job to clean the toilets. ... It caused a lot of animosity between the detainees and the officers because of that."

Further, they said, not being able to work makes it harder for detainees to buy extra food at the center's commissary, supplementing what they consider to be inadequate meals provided by GEO.

While detainees are looking forward to a potential payout, "there's a lot of people in here that that dollar makes a difference," Soares said. While he has relatives outside who provide him money to spend at the commissary, he said, he would use his earnings every week to buy five or six ramen noodle packages for other detainees.

The detention center — officially called the Northwest ICE Processing Center — can house up to 1,575 detainees, though the population has been greatly reduced during the pandemic and numbered about 400 last month. Detainees there are not being punished for any crimes, but held in civil custody while the government sorts out their immigration status or prepares to deport them.

[Two lawsuits](#) were filed in 2017 over detainee pay — one by Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, and one by attorneys for the detainees. They accused GEO of profiting on the backs of captive workers.

The cases were consolidated for trial, and a [U.S. District Court jury ruled on Oct. 27 that the detainees were entitled to minimum wage](#). It ordered GEO to give more than 10,000 current and former detainees \$17.3 million in back pay dating to 2014. Judge Robert Bryan further ruled this week that the company had unjustly enriched itself and must cough up \$5.9 million to Washington state.

GEO asked the judge Thursday to put the decisions on hold pending an appeal. The corporation wrote that it has enough money on hand "to pay the Judgments twenty times over," but said it disagreed with the decisions.

In a news release, the company pointed to a March ruling against detainees at a New Mexico facility owned by the nation's other main private immigration detention contractor, CoreCivic. GEO and CoreCivic own and operate scores of lockups around the country.

A federal appeals court panel in that case found the detainees were not entitled to minimum wage because they were "not in an employer-employee relationship but in a detainer-detainee relationship."

Washington's minimum wage law says residents of state, county and municipal detention facilities are not entitled to minimum wage, but the law contains no such exception for private, for-profit jails.

ICE requires private immigration detention contractors to offer voluntary work programs as a way to reduce detainee idleness, with pay set at "at least" \$1 per day. However, the companies are also required to abide by other federal, state and local laws — including Washington's Minimum Wage Act, the attorney general and lawyers for detainees argued.

	<p>On Oct. 29, GEO received permission from ICE to suspend the work program, court documents show.</p> <p>Some detainees were given a GEO memo that day explaining they could no longer perform the work they used to do; the memo falsely said ICE had suspended the work program, according to an image provided to the AP.</p> <p>The three detainees the AP interviewed, who are all in the same unit, said they had not seen the memo. Two said they had noticed more guards than usual working in the kitchen to prepare food, and one, Venezuelan Victor Fonseca, 40, said he at one point saw a guard mopping the floor in the showers.</p> <p>Soares, 44, from the state of Goias in central Brazil, used to work nightly 12 a.m.-4 a.m. shifts cleaning and buffing floors. He said that by last Saturday, the floors and bathrooms in his unit, which then housed 32 men, were so grimy that he asked to be allowed to clean them despite the work program's suspension.</p> <p>Guards agreed, and he spent four hours, unpaid, cleaning, Soares said. No one else was allowed to help him.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Suit: Pierce Co. Sheriff Dept discrimination</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/black-women-at-pierce-sheriffs-department-sue-alleging-discrimination">https://www.q13fox.com/news/black-women-at-pierce-sheriffs-department-sue-alleging-discrimination</a>
GIST	<p><b>TACOMA, Wash.</b> - Three Black women who work for the Pierce County Sheriff's Department have filed a lawsuit against the county alleging a long-standing pattern of discrimination, harassment and retaliation against minority employees.</p> <p>The News Tribune <a href="#">reports</a> Lt. Charla James-Hutchison and Sgts. Dione Alexander and Sabrina Braswell-Bouyer are the highest-ranking African American women in the department's 168-year history.</p> <p>Their attorneys filed the suit on their behalf Monday, claiming that the women — who all work in Pierce County Jail — have suffered emotional distress, economic losses and damage to their reputations due to the decades of discrimination.</p> <p>No specific damages are specified in the lawsuit. James-Hutchison, Alexander and Braswell-Bouyer are among 12 Black women who work for the Sheriff's Department, according to county statistics.</p> <p>There are 47 Black sworn employees in the department out of about 614.</p> <p>The women have been subjected to racial slurs, told they were only hired or promoted to "fill a quota," called thugs because of their hairstyles, had colleagues make comments about how the COVID-19 vaccines should be tested on Black people before white people, " the suit says.</p> <p>Adam Faber, spokesman for the Prosecutor's Office, which represents the Sheriff's Department in legal matters, said he cannot comment on pending litigation.</p>
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## Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Hacker steals \$55M from bZx DeFi platform</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/hacker-steals-55-million-from-bzx-defi-platform/">https://therecord.media/hacker-steals-55-million-from-bzx-defi-platform/</a>
GIST	<b>A hacker has stolen an estimated \$55 million worth of cryptocurrency assets from bZx, a decentralized finance (DeFi) platform that allows users to borrow, loan, and speculate on cryptocurrency price variations.</b>

“A bZx developer was sent a phishing email to his personal computer with a malicious macro in a Word document that was disguised as a legitimate email attachment,” the company said in a [preliminary post mortem](#) of the attack published on Friday night, hours after the hack.

bZx said the email attachment ran a script on the developer’s computer that compromised the employee’s mnemonic wallet phrase.

The attacker then proceeded to empty the developer’s personal wallet and then stole two private keys from the employee’s computer that were being used by the bZx platform for its integration with the Polygon and Binance Smart Chain (BSC) blockchains.

The hacker then used these keys to steal the platform’s Polygon and BSC funds, along with the same funds from a small number of users who approved unlimited spend operations for the two tokens in their accounts.

While bZx said it’s still investigating the exact amount of stolen funds, blockchain security firm SlowMist put the sum at more than \$55 million, based on the malicious transactions it detected.

In the aftermath of the hack, bZx said it disabled its website’s UI to prevent users from depositing new funds and was working with various cryptocurrency exchanges to track the attacker and freeze and potentially recover the stolen funds.

#### **bZx asks hacker for their funds back; promises a bounty**

In addition, the DeFi platform has also put out a message directly addressed to the hacker:

**We encourage this individual to reach out to the DAO at [hello@bzx.network](mailto:hello@bzx.network) to discuss returning the funds and potential bounty.**

bZx is hoping for a repeat of the PolyNetwork incident, where the attacker returned all the \$600 million stolen funds back to the company after similar negotiations.

The bZx incident currently joins the list at #5 as one of the largest cryptocurrency heists that have taken place this year...

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HEADLINE	11/07 So, what is ‘the metaverse’ exactly?
SOURCE	<a href="https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2021/11/everyone-pitching-the-metaverse-has-a-different-idea-of-what-it-is/">https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2021/11/everyone-pitching-the-metaverse-has-a-different-idea-of-what-it-is/</a>
GIST	<p>These days it seems like everybody and their corporate parent company is talking about "the metaverse" as the next big thing that's going to revolutionize our online lives. But everyone seems to have their own idea of what "the metaverse" means—that is, if they have any real idea what it means at all.</p> <p>The term "metaverse" was originally coined in Neal Stephenson's <a href="#">seminal 1992 cyberpunk novel, <i>Snow Crash</i></a>. In the book, the Metaverse (always capitalized in Stephenson's fiction) is a shared "imaginary place" that's "made available to the public over the worldwide fiber-optics network" and projected onto virtual reality goggles. In it, developers can "build buildings, parks, signs, as well as things that do not exist in Reality, such as vast hovering overhead light shows, special neighborhoods where the rules of three-dimensional spacetime are ignored, and free-combat zones where people can go to hunt and kill each other."</p> <p>Meta (formerly Facebook) CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his colleagues mentioned the word "metaverse" 80+ times in under 90 minutes during <a href="#">last week's Facebook Connect keynote presentation</a>, where the company <a href="#">announced its new name</a>. But Stephenson has <a href="#">made it abundantly clear</a> that "there has been zero communication between me and FB &amp; no biz relationship." That means Facebook's interpretation of "the metaverse" might end up being quite different from what Stephenson originally described.</p>



While Meta's rebranding drives most of the metaverse conversation these days, the nearly 30 years since *Snow Crash* appeared have seen plenty of online networks that embody some or most of what Stephenson's book describes. These efforts to create "the metaverse" have included numerous online games and gathering places that captured some of the metaverse's most important concepts without ever using the term.

"But here we are," as Oculus consulting CTO John Carmack [recently put it](#). "Mark Zuckerberg has decided that now is the time to build the metaverse, so enormous wheels are turning and resources are flowing and the effort is definitely going to be made."

So is the metaverse the next big advance that will revolutionize the way we all connect with each other? Is it just a repackaging of existing technologies into a new catch-all concept? Or is it just the latest buzzword marketing term?

The answer to that depends on what you mean by "metaverse."

### **Defining the metaverse**

In his Facebook Connect keynote last week, Zuckerberg said that "the best way to understand the metaverse is to experience it yourself, but it's a little tough because it doesn't fully exist yet." From where we're sitting, asking people to try out some nonexistent thing doesn't seem like the best way to convey a full understanding of your bold new corporate direction.

Elsewhere in the keynote, Zuckerberg described a grandiose vision of the metaverse as an "even more immersive and embodied internet" where "you're gonna be able to do almost anything you can imagine—get together with friends and family, work, learn, play, shop, create—as well as entirely new categories that don't really fit how we think about computers or phones today." That helps a bit, but any description that includes the words "almost anything you can imagine" is so broad as to be almost meaningless.

After breaking down Meta's vision—and looking at the history of the metaverse both as a concept and as embodied multiple distinct online spaces—we've identified the following elements that, taken together, seem to define a metaverse. Anything that has any business using the term will include one or all of the following:

#### **A shared social space with avatars to represent users**

This basic building block of the metaverse concept is what Zuckerberg is talking about when he calls for a more "embodied" Internet. On a web site or social media network, you might be represented by a username or thumbnail picture. In the metaverse, you're represented by a customizable avatar that can move, speak, and/or perform animated actions.

These kinds of avatars have been common in all sorts of online gaming and social spaces since the '90s (anyone remember [Habbo Hotel](#)?). But an avatar's fidelity and abilities can vary greatly from service to service. Recent advances in virtual reality have enabled users to truly embody their fantastical avatars, seeing through their virtual eyes and using hand-tracking controllers to gesture and interact with virtual items. Spaces like VRChat [show just how elaborate those VR avatars can now be](#).

#### **A persistent "world" for the avatars to inhabit and interact with**

In some cases, this means a virtual world that mimics the space constraints and land scarcity of the real world, as seen in [Second Life's discrete plots of land](#). In other cases, it just means users sharing specially created spaces for a particular game or a special time-sensitive event, like [recent multimedia concerts held in Fortnite](#).

In an idealized metaverse, every single user [shares a single virtual world](#), where items and property persist for everyone between online sessions. For technical reasons, though, many modern metaverse-like spaces end up splitting users into sharded servers where a small subset of users can interact.

#### **The ability to own virtual property as you would physical property**



This can mean anything from [a Neopets JPG](#) that's associated with your account to [a collection of powerful gear in World of Warcraft](#). In either case, your virtual property stays linked to you and doesn't disappear between sessions.

Recently, people have tried to [use non-fungible tokens](#) as a decentralized way to track and establish ownership of virtual goods, independent of any controlling authority or corporate server. In theory, such NFTs could allow virtual goods to be moved freely between metaverses controlled by different companies. In practice, the level of standard-setting and inter-corporate cooperation necessary for this kind of portability writ large remains a pipe dream.

### **The ability to create your own virtual property**

Allowing users to make their own metaverse content can be seen as a boon both for users—who get to shape the virtual world to their whims—and for the metaverse makers—who don't have to spend a lot of time and effort creating every single virtual object from scratch. Games like *Minecraft* and *Roblox* show how metaverses that provide relatively simple building blocks can harness network effects and player creativity to produce a huge variety of in-world creations.

But filling a metaverse with virtual objects isn't as simple as just saying "let the users do it." Questions of control, moderation, and copyright infringement can take on outsized importance here, especially if your metaverse is controlled by a corporation that wants to draw value from all that user-generated work (and if the users want to share the profits).

### **The ability to exchange and/or sell your virtual property**

This can range from things like [no-longer-grey-market](#) currency exchanges for *World of Warcraft* gold farming to [strictly regulated full in-universe economies](#) like [those in EVE Online](#). Somewhere in the middle you have games like *Second Life*, where disagreements over player "ownership" of the virtual land created by publisher Linden Labs have been [argued in US courts](#).

### **A shared universe of IP from multiple major companies**

This element of the metaverse idea was heavily popularized by *Ready Player One*, the 2011 novel and [2018 movie](#) featuring a virtual world that combined elements of countless nostalgic media properties, from *Joust* and *Dungeons and Dragons* to *WarGames* and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Media consolidation aids this concept, allowing for [virtual worlds where Gandalf could fight Bugs Bunny](#) through the unexpected largesse of common corporate parent Warner Bros. But crossovers that reach past a single corporate walled garden are becoming more common, too: characters from Nintendo, Microsoft, Sega, Square Enix, Capcom, Namco, Konami, and more [all interact in Super Smash Bros. Ultimate](#), for instance. Meanwhile, *Fortnite* has played host to official crossovers from Disney/Marvel/Star Wars, John Wick, DC Comics, Ghostbusters, *God of War*, *Halo*, the NFL, [and many more](#).

### **Full 3D telepresence via VR or AR glasses**

This is seen by many as the last step in achieving a "full" metaverse. Virtual and augmented reality could allow us to advance past the "magic windows" of our flat screens to a world where one actually feels a sense of "presence" with other 3D avatars occupying the same location. "It'll feel like you're right in the room together making eye contact, having a shared sense of space and not just looking at a grid of faces on a screen," as Meta put it in its keynote.

Early efforts like [VRChat](#) and Meta's own [Horizon Worlds](#) and [Horizon Workplaces](#) already serve as strong proof-of-concept examples of how this could work. But [sharing a room with 16 other avatars in Horizon](#) is "a far cry from the metaverse of our visions," as Carmack [pointed out last week](#). Many technical problems will need to be overcome to have a VR metaverse with "thousands of people milling about" and wandering in and out of virtual rooms at will, as Carmack envisions.

### **Whose metaverse is it, anyway?**

Besides these generalized building blocks, it's also important to differentiate between "a metaverse" and "The Metaverse." While they sound similar, changing the article preceding "metaverse" can heavily impact the meaning.

The difference has to do with control. Broadly speaking, any corporate entity or group of programmers can create "a metaverse" that meets any or all of the above criteria, just as anyone can create a social network. In these cases, a single entity manages the servers, polices user conduct, and sets rules for how the virtual world works.

On the other end of the spectrum is a completely open architecture, where different entities and interoperable servers connect to a single shared Metaverse—the Metaverse—via a shared set of broadly agreed-upon standards. Successes like the world wide web and email show how this is possible in the wider online world, but similar efforts to establish metaverse standards have mostly failed to catch on.

Stephenson's *Snow Crash* described something of a hybrid approach between these two poles. An individual user's view of Stephenson's Metaverse is "the graphic representations—the user interfaces—of myriad different pieces of software that have been engineered by major corporations," he wrote. But the virtual world those pieces of software live in is controlled by the Global Multimedia Protocol Group, which developers need to work with to "get zoning approval, obtain permits, bribe inspectors, the whole bit."

While plenty of companies are building "a metaverse" of sorts, the end goal for many of them seems to be taking control of "The Metaverse," the singular place where *everyone* shares their online lives. Right now, it seems vanishingly unlikely that any single corporate-controlled metaverse will become that popular, though. Absent some sort of workable decentralized standard emerging, we'll likely see dozens of balkanized metaverses fighting for mind share and market share without allowing for much interaction between them.

### **What problem are you solving?**

Depending on how strict you are with the above definitions, there are plenty of existing online structures that could be described as metaverses. Many have grown out of the world of gaming, where the idea of sharing a virtual space with other characters represented by avatars is a long-established fact of life.

Clive Thompson [argues persuasively](#) that *Minecraft* is already a metaverse in every way that matters. Epic's Tim Sweeney sees *Fortnite* as [the central pillar of the company's own metaverse](#). The [multi-billion dollar Roblox](#) lets users create millions of shared public "experiences" ([don't call them "games"](#)) under a single standard. A lucky few *Roblox* creators even make a full-time living creating those spaces (which include [unofficial Squid Game recreations](#) that skirt IP laws deftly).

*Second Life*, *VRChat*, and *EVE Online* could all be considered metaverses in their own right. Even a simpler online game like *Grand Theft Auto Online* is a metaverse in a sense. As Take-Two CEO Strauss Zelnick [recently told GamesIndustry.biz](#):

If... you define metaverse as an engaging digital landscape where you can present yourself as an avatar, where you can talk to people and hang out with people, where you can bicycle, surf, motorcycle, drive, compete, tell stories, be told stories, have live events, sit at a casino table... well, then we already have metaverses here at Take-Two.

In this sense, "the metaverse" isn't some amorphous futuristic idea that nobody can really understand. It's just something that countless companies are building today.

When Meta and others talk about "The Metaverse," though, they're going a bit beyond that basic definition. The metaverse of Zuckerberg's vision isn't just a place for people to hang out as avatars but a full-blown revolution of the online experience, offering a space where people will spend the bulk of their online lives. Meta and others see the future metaverse as so compelling that it will largely or completely replace the "flat" Internet we know, and it will be used for everything from corporate meetings to shopping to massive social gatherings.

### **Is this the future of concerts?**

This vision of the metaverse has been relatively common in fiction for decades now. And there are some signs that younger generations are more comfortable replacing real-world gatherings with virtualized ones; just ask the 12 million people who [saw a Travis Scott concert in \*Fortnite\* last year](#).

But for any online or real-world function that you think will occur in a future metaverse, you first have to ask what problem the metaverse solves for users. Yes, holding a corporate meeting with VR avatars could offer *some* utility over the awkward video wall of today's Zoom meetings (or the travel needed for real-world meetings). But even with likely advances in the comfort of VR headsets and the verisimilitude of VR avatars, that sort of all-encompassing VR gathering might seem overwhelming to employees used to tabbing away to other tasks during Zoom meetings.

#### **Driving a ferrari in *Fortnite* is a lot simpler than doing so in the real world.**

And sure, shopping in a simulated virtual world holds some promise, whether it's [test-driving a car in \*Fortnite\*](#) or simply buying artificially rare virtual goods as an online status symbol. But questions remain about how individual users can monetize their own creations or how much of a cut needs to be taken to keep the metaverse up and running.

Some foresee a metaverse where everyone can make money [via play-to-earn schemes](#) or boutique virtual item creation. But examples like *Roblox* show us that virtual worlds usually have the same economic stratification as the real world, where [only top-tier creators](#) (or those who got in on the ground floor) can actually make a decent living. In this sense, Stephenson was probably prescient in *Snow Crash*. "By getting in on it early, Hiro's buddies got a head start on the whole [metaverse] business," he wrote. "Some of them even got very rich off of it."

Right now, companies are [following their FOMO](#) and looking for that first-mover advantage in the coming metaverse, staking a claim to a brave new virtual world before the scaffolding for it is even fully built. While elements of Stephenson's metaverse idea will continue to show up in countless online worlds, that doesn't mean we'll necessarily be living in a single, self-contained VR metaverse any time soon.

Or, as Take-Two's Zelnick put it, "If you define metaverse as 'everything we do in the world physically will become digital,' then you're talking to a skeptic."

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HEADLINE	11/05 FBI: scams using crypto-ATMs, QR codes
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/fbi-scams-involving-cryptocurrency-atms-and-qr-codes-rise">https://www.securityweek.com/fbi-scams-involving-cryptocurrency-atms-and-qr-codes-rise</a>
GIST	<p><b>The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) this week issued an alert on fraud schemes that direct victims to use cryptocurrency ATMs and Quick Response (QR) codes to make payment transactions.</b></p> <p>QR codes can be used to populate recipient fields when attempting to send cryptocurrency to a specific destination and can also be used at cryptocurrency ATMs to make payments.</p> <p>While QR codes have been used for legitimate payments for some time now, cybercriminals have started to abuse them to receive fraudulent cryptocurrency payments from their victims.</p> <p>For that, the threat actors engage in online impersonation schemes – where they pose as government, legal officers, law enforcement, or a utility company – as well as romance and lottery schemes, to trick unsuspecting victims into sending them money.</p> <p>“The scammer often requests payment from the victim and may direct the victim to withdraw money from the victim’s financial accounts, such as investment or retirement accounts,” the FBI explains.</p> <p>The victim is provided with a QR code associated with the scammer’s cryptowallet and is also directed to a physical cryptocurrency ATM to purchase cryptocurrency and send it to the scammer using the provided QR code.</p>

	<p>According to the FBI, the scammers are often in constant communication with the victim throughout the entire process, to provide them with step-by-step instructions and make sure the payment is completed.</p> <p>Funds sent this way are difficult to recover, due to the decentralized nature of cryptocurrency, the Bureau also explains. Once the payment has been completed, the threat actor instantly owns the cryptocurrency and usually transfers it to an account overseas.</p> <p>“This differs from traditional bank transfers or wires where a payment transaction can remain pending for one to two days before settlement. It can also make law enforcement’s recovery of the funds difficult and can leave many victims with a financial loss,” the FBI explains.</p> <p>Individuals are <a href="#">advised</a> to never send payments to people they have only spoken with online, to never scan QR codes and send payments via cryptocurrency ATMs at the instruction of untrusted individuals, to not respond to calls claiming cryptocurrency payments, to be cautious of entities claiming they can only accept cryptocurrency, to avoid cryptocurrency ATMs that advertise anonymity, and to cancel transactions when a cryptocurrency ATM operator calls to say the operations are consistent with fraud.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 FBI: ransomware hit tribal-owned casinos</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/fbi-ransomware-gangs-hit-several-tribal-owned-casinos-in-the-last-year/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/fbi-ransomware-gangs-hit-several-tribal-owned-casinos-in-the-last-year/</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI's Cyber Division said in a private industry notification issued earlier this week that ransomware gangs have hit several tribal-owned casinos, taking down their systems and disabling connected systems.</p> <p>These attacks are part of a long series of similar incidents targeting tribal entities since 2016, with damages estimated in the millions of dollars in recent months.</p> <p>Ransomware-hit casinos had to shut down their gaming floors, as well as restaurants, hotels, and gas stations, causing significant revenues losses after being forced into providing limited or no services to customers while working on restoring their systems.</p> <p>Limited cyber investigative capabilities and law enforcement resources are likely some of the reasons behind ransomware groups' seeing US tribes as desirable targets, according to the FBI.</p> <p>Ransomware gangs that coordinated attacks against tribal communities include REvil (Sodinokibi), Bitpaymer, Ryuk, Conti, Snatch, and Cuba.</p> <p>Due to these incidents, tribal entities have dealt with operational disruption, theft of sensitive data, and financial losses.</p> <p><b>Ransomware also hit tribes' emergency and healthcare systems</b></p> <p>The FBI also said that these ransomware attacks had impacted tribal-owned businesses and public services, including tribal governments, healthcare and emergency service providers, and schools.</p> <p>The attacks' impact varied depending on the tribal entity affected but, in at least one case, ransomware operators took down a tribe's police department's computer system, the 911 system, and the public health system.</p> <p>One example is the ransomware attack that hit and <a href="#">took down the network of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI)</a> in December 2019.</p> <p>Law enforcement officials later <a href="#">arrested and charged</a> a tribal employee for the cyberattack following an investigation led by the Cherokee Indian Police Department, helped by FBI's Cyber Security Response Team, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, and the US Department of Homeland Security.</p>

	<p>Seeing that the frequency of <a href="#">ransomware attacks</a> and <a href="#">ransom demands</a> have slowly but steadily increased over the last couple of years, tribal communities will likely be further impacted since they will have to redirect additional resources and funds to boost their cybersecurity defenses.</p> <p>To show the scale of the financial losses ransomware targets are facing lately, last month, the US Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) identified roughly \$5.2 billion in <a href="#">outgoing BTC transactions potentially tied to ransomware payments</a>.</p> <p>The same day, senior officials from over 30 countries said that their governments would <a href="#">crack down on cryptocurrency payment channels</a> used by ransomware gangs to finance their operations.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 State hackers breached critical sectors</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/state-hackers-breach-defense-energy-healthcare-orgs-worldwide/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/state-hackers-breach-defense-energy-healthcare-orgs-worldwide/</a>
GIST	<p>Cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks warned over the weekend of an ongoing hacking campaign that has already resulted in the compromise of at least nine organizations worldwide from critical sectors, including defense, healthcare, energy, technology, and education.</p> <p>To breach the orgs networks, the threat actors behind this cyberespionage campaign exploited a critical vulnerability (<a href="#">CVE-2021-40539</a>) in Zoho's enterprise password management solution known as ManageEngine ADSelfService Plus which allows remotely executing code on unpatched systems without authentication.</p> <p>The attacks observed by Palo Alto Networks researchers started on September 17 with scans for vulnerable servers, nine days after the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) <a href="#">warned it detected exploits used in the wild</a> and one day after a <a href="#">joint advisory was published</a> by CISA, the FBI, and the United States Coast Guard Cyber Command (CGCYBER).</p> <p>Exploitation attempts began on September 22 after five days of harvesting info on potential targets who hadn't yet patched their systems.</p> <p>"While we lack insight into the totality of organizations that were exploited during this campaign, we believe that, globally, at least nine entities across the technology, defense, healthcare, energy and education industries were compromised," <a href="#">the researchers said</a>.</p> <p>"Through global telemetry, we believe that the actor targeted at least 370 Zoho ManageEngine servers in the United States alone. Given the scale, we assess that these scans were largely indiscriminate in nature as targets ranged from education to Department of Defense entities."</p> <p>Following the joint advisory, the researchers observed another series of unrelated attacks that failed to compromise their targets, hinting at other state-backed or financially-motivated hacking groups likely joining in to exploit companies using Zoho servers.</p> <p>Right now, according to Palo Alto Networks' scans, there are over 11,000 internet-exposed servers running the vulnerable Zoho software — it's currently unknown how many of these systems have been patched.</p> <p><b>Targets on credentials, persistence</b></p> <p>After successfully getting a foothold on their victims' systems using CVE-2021-40539 exploits, the threat actors first deployed a malware dropper that delivered Godzilla web shells on compromised servers to gain and maintain access to the victims' networks, as well as malware, including an open-source backdoor known as NGLite.</p>



They also used KdcSponge, malware known as credential stealer, which hooks into Windows LSASS API functions to capture credentials (i.e., domain names, usernames, and passwords) that later get sent to attacker-controlled servers.

"After gaining access to the initial server, the actors focused their efforts on gathering and exfiltrating sensitive information from local domain controllers, such as the Active Directory database file (ntds.dit) and the SYSTEM hive from the registry," the researchers found.

"Ultimately, the actor was interested in stealing credentials, maintaining access and gathering sensitive files from victim networks for exfiltration."

#### **Attacks linked to Chinese APT27 state hackers**

Even though the researchers are working on attributing these attacks to a specific hacking group, they suspect that this is the work of a Chinese-sponsored threat group known as [APT27](#) (also tracked as TG-3390, Emissary Panda, BRONZE UNION, Iron Tiger, and LuckyMouse).

The partial attribution is based on malicious tools and tactics used in this campaign that match APT27's previous activity as a hacking group active since at least 2010 and targeting the same range of industry sectors (e.g., defense, technology, energy, aerospace, government, and manufacturing) in cyber espionage campaigns.

Palo Alto Networks' report also includes analysis from US Government partners, including NSA's Cybersecurity Collaboration Center, a component designed to prevent and block foreign cyber threats to National Security Systems (NSS), the Department of Defense, and the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) with the help of private industry partners.

In early March, [APT27 was also linked to attacks](#) exploiting critical bugs (dubbed ProxyLogon) to achieve remote code execution without authentication on unpatched on-premises Microsoft Exchange servers worldwide.

US and allies, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, and NATO, [officially blamed China in June](#) for this year's widespread Microsoft Exchange hacking campaign.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Interpol takes down prolific cybercrime ring</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2021/INTERPOL-led-operation-takes-down-prolific-cybercrime-ring?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2021/INTERPOL-led-operation-takes-down-prolific-cybercrime-ring?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>SEOUL, Korea - A 30-month transcontinental investigation and operation has resulted in arrests and Red Notices for suspects believed to be behind a global malware crime network.</p> <p>Two Red Notices, which are internationally wanted persons alerts, have been circulated to INTERPOL's 194 member countries following a request by Korea's cybercrime investigation division via INTERPOL's National Central Bureau in Seoul.</p> <p>The Notices follow the Ukraine arrest of six members of a notorious ransomware family during a global operation coordinated by INTERPOL with Korean, Ukrainian and US law enforcement authorities in June.</p> <p>The global strike – codenamed Operation Cyclone – follows global police investigations into attacks against Korean companies and US academic institutions by the Cl0p ransomware threat group.</p> <p>Cl0p malware operators in Ukraine allegedly attacked private and business targets in Korea and the US by blocking access to their computer files and networks, and then demanded extortionate ransoms for restoring access.</p>

The suspects are thought to have facilitated the transfer and cash-out of assets on behalf of the ransomware group whilst also threatening to make sensitive data public if additional payments were not made.

#### Intelligence-led operation

Operation Cyclone was coordinated from INTERPOL's Cyber Fusion Centre in Singapore where stakeholders shared intelligence in an interactive and secure environment via INTERPOL's global network and capabilities.

The resulting intelligence enabled Ukrainian police to search more than 20 houses, businesses and vehicles, confiscate property and computers, and seize USD 185,000 in cash assets, as well as to make the six arrests.

“Despite spiralling global ransomware attacks, this police-private sector coalition saw one of global law enforcement's first online criminal gang arrests, which sends a powerful message to ransomware criminals, that no matter where they hide in cyberspace, we will pursue them relentlessly,” said INTERPOL's Director of Cybercrime Craig Jones.

INTERPOL deployed Operation Cyclone with the assistance of information provided by its private partners Trend Micro, CDI, Kaspersky Lab, Palo Alto Networks, Fortinet and Group-IB through INTERPOL's Gateway project.

Gateway boosts law enforcement and private industry partnerships to generate threat data from multiple sources and enable police authorities to prevent attacks.

Further illustrating the power of private sector cooperation in cybercrime investigations, two Korea-based cyber threat companies – S2W LAB and KFSI – also provided INTERPOL with valuable dark web data analysis throughout the operation.

Operation Cyclone continues to supply evidence that is feeding into further cybercrime investigations and enabling the international police community to disrupt numerous channels used by cybercriminals to launder cryptocurrency.

#### Significant security threat

The six suspects are believed to be tightly linked to a Russian-language cybercriminal gang known for naming-and-shaming its victims on a Tor leak site, and for moving more than USD 500 million in funds linked to multiple ransomware activities.

Their attacks target key infrastructure, such as transportation and logistics, education, manufacturing, energy, financial, aerospace, telecommunications, healthcare and high-tech sectors worldwide.

If convicted, the six suspects face up to eight years in prison.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Defense contractor EWA hit in breach</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/us-defense-contractor-electronic-warfare-hit-by-data-breach/?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/us-defense-contractor-electronic-warfare-hit-by-data-breach/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>US defense contractor Electronic Warfare Associates (EWA) has disclosed a data breach after threat actors hacked their email system and stole files containing personal information.</p> <p>The company claims the breach's impact was limited but confirmed that the threat actor managed to exfiltrate files containing sensitive information.</p> <p>As detailed in a notice to the Montana Attorney General's office, EWA discovered that a threat actor took over one of their email accounts on August 2, 2021.</p>



The firm noticed the infiltration when the hacker attempted wire fraud, which appears to be the primary goal of the actor.

"Based on our investigation, we determined that a threat actor infiltrated EWA email on August 2, 2021. We were made aware of the situation when the threat actor attempted wire fraud," reads EWA's [data incident notification](#).

"We have no reason to believe the purpose of the infiltration was to obtain personal information. Nevertheless, the threat actor's activities did result in the exfiltration of files with certain personal information (as described below)."

Based on the investigation that followed, it was discovered that names, social security numbers (SSNs), and the driver's license of the notice recipients were also stolen.

As such, the wire fraud attempt may have been a distraction, which is entirely plausible for sophisticated actors who are interested in targeting highly-sensitive firms of this type.

It is unclear if the stolen information affects only the company's employees and whether or not technical documents have also been stolen during the incident.

In response to the security lapse, the company is now offering a two-year subscription to identity theft protection services through Equifax.

Moreover, the notice urges recipients to monitor their credit reports and financial account statements closely.

#### **A high-profile clientele**

EWA is a specialist in high-tech defense hardware and software solutions for communication, access control, simulation, training, management, testing, and monitoring systems (radars).

Many of these products are made for highly sensitive customers, including the U.S. Department of Defense (Army, Navy, Air Force, DARPA, OSD), the Department of Justice, and Homeland Security (DHS).

A data breach on the firm's email systems may have also compromised military technology secrets as EWA develops and designs these products internally.

EWA also develops commercial products through subsidiary brands like [Corelis](#) (electronic testing and analysis) and [Blackhawk](#) (debugging tools).

We have reached out to EWA asking for more details about the hacking incident and the exact impact it has on them, and we will update this post if we receive a response.

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HEADLINE	11/05 Proofpoint phish harvests credentials
SOURCE	<a href="https://threatpost.com/proofpoint-phish-microsoft-o365-google-logins/176038/?web_view=true">https://threatpost.com/proofpoint-phish-microsoft-o365-google-logins/176038/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Phishers are impersonating Proofpoint, the cybersecurity firm, in an attempt to make off with victims' Microsoft Office 365 and Google email credentials.</p> <p>According to researchers at Armorblox, they spotted one such campaign lobbed at an unnamed global communications company, with nearly a thousand employees targeted just within that one organization.</p> <p>"The email claimed to contain a secure file sent via Proofpoint as a link," they explained <a href="#">in a posting</a> on Thursday.</p>

“Clicking the link took victims to a splash page that spoofed Proofpoint branding and contained login links for different email providers. The attack included dedicated login page spoofs for Microsoft and Google.”

The email lure was a file purportedly linked to mortgage payments. The subject line, “Re: Payoff Request,” was geared to fool targets into thinking it was part of ongoing correspondence, which adds an air of legitimacy while also lending urgency to the proceedings.

“Adding ‘Re’ to the email title is a tactic we have observed scammers using before – this signifies an ongoing conversation and might make victims click the email faster,” according to the analysis.

If users clicked on the “secure” email link embedded in the message, they were taken to the splash page with Proofpoint branding and the login spoofs.

“Clicking on the Google and [Office 365 buttons](#) led to dedicated spoofed login flows for Google and Microsoft respectively,” researchers explained. “Both flows asked for the victim’s email address and password.”

Because the phish replicated workflows that already exist in many users’ daily lives (i.e., receiving email notifications when files are shared with them via the cloud), attackers were banking on users not questioning the emails too much, researchers noted.

“When we see emails we’ve already seen before, our brains tend to employ [System 1 thinking](#) and take quick action,” according to the analysis.

In terms of infrastructure, the email was sent from a compromised but legitimate email account belonging to a fire department in Southern France. This helped the phish evade detection by Microsoft’s native email security filters, according to Armorblox, which noted that the emails were marked with a spam risk level of “1.” In other words, they weren’t flagged as spam at all.

Also, the phishing pages were hosted on the “greenleafproperties[.]co[.]uk” parent domain.

“The domain’s WhoIs record shows it was last updated in April 2021,” researchers said. “The URL currently redirects to ‘cvgproperties[.]co[.]uk.’ The barebones website with questionable marketing [increases] the possibility that this is a dummy site.”

Attacks like these use social engineering, brand impersonation and the use of legitimate infrastructure to bypass traditional email security filters and users’ eye tests. To protect against such campaigns, Armorblox offered the following advice:

- **Be aware of social engineering:** Users should subject email to an eye test that includes inspecting the sender name, sender email address, language within the email and any logical inconsistencies within the email (e.g. Why is the email coming from a .fr domain? Why is a mortgage-related notification coming to my work email?).
- **Shore up password hygiene:** Deploy multi-factor authentication (MFA) on all possible business and personal accounts, don’t use the same password on multiple sites/accounts and avoid using passwords that tie into publicly available information (date of birth, anniversary date, etc.).

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HEADLINE	11/05 Ransomware attack on lab in Florida
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ransomware-attack-on-florida-lab/?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ransomware-attack-on-florida-lab/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>A ransomware attack on a laboratory based in Florida has exposed the personal health information (PHI) of more than 30,000 patients.</p> <p><a href="#">Nationwide Laboratory Services</a>, which is based in Boca Raton, identified suspicious activity on its network on May 19, 2021. An examination of the activity revealed that attackers had used ransomware to encrypt files across the healthcare provider’s network, making their contents inaccessible.</p>

The lab hired a third-party cybersecurity firm to investigate the attack and assist with remediation. Digital forensics revealed that cyber-attackers had broken into areas of Nationwide Laboratory Services' network that contained patients' PHI.

Lawbreakers behind the ransomware assault encrypted files in which patient data was stored, including names, dates of birth, lab test results, medical record numbers, Medicare numbers, and health insurance information.

A [notice](#) released by Nationwide Laboratory Services regarding the security incident warned: "A limited number of individuals had Social Security number also impacted."

The lab said that the cyber-attack had not affected all patients of Nationwide. It also said that the amount of data exposed in the incident differed from patient to patient.

"Nationwide has no evidence that any information was or will be used for any unintended purpose," stated the laboratory.

A [report](#) concerning the breach was submitted by Nationwide to the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights on October 28. The report indicates the PHI of up to 33,437 individuals may have been exposed.

Patients who were affected by the ransomware attack have been notified and provided with best practices to protect their information. Nationwide urged impacted individuals to remain vigilant for signs of identity theft, and to review their financial account statements on a regular basis for any fraudulent activity.

On top of encrypting an unspecified number of files belonging to Nationwide, the cyber-criminals behind the attack on the laboratory potentially deleted some files from their victim's network.

The laboratory stated: "On May 19, 2021, Nationwide Laboratory Services detected that a ransomware infection began encrypting files stored on its network. In addition to encrypting files, an unauthorized party may have removed a limited number of files from its system."

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HEADLINE	11/05 Report: initial access broker 'Zebra2104'
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.zdnet.com/article/blackberry-report-highlights-initial-access-broker-providing-entry-to-strongpity-apt-mountlocker-and-phobos-ransomware-gangs/?web_view=true">https://www.zdnet.com/article/blackberry-report-highlights-initial-access-broker-providing-entry-to-strongpity-apt-mountlocker-and-phobos-ransomware-gangs/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>A <a href="#">new report</a> from BlackBerry has uncovered an initial access broker called "Zebra2104" that has connections to three malicious cybercriminal groups, some of which are involved in ransomware and phishing.</p> <p>The BlackBerry Research &amp; Intelligence team found that Zebra2104 provided entry points to ransomware groups like MountLocker and Phobos as well as the StrongPity APT. The access was provided to a number of companies in Australia and Turkey that had been compromised.</p> <p>The StrongPity APT targeted Turkish businesses in the healthcare space as well as smaller companies. BlackBerry said that from their research, they believe the access broker "has a lot of manpower or they've set up some large 'hidden in plain sight' traps across the internet."</p> <p>The report said their investigation led them to believe that the MountLocker ransomware group had been working with StrongPity, an APT group dating back to 2012 that some alleged was a Turkish state-sponsored group.</p> <p>"While it might seem implausible for criminal groups to be sharing resources, we found these groups had a connection that is enabled by a fourth; a threat actor we have dubbed Zebra2104, which we believe to be</p>

an Initial Access Broker (IAB). There is undoubtedly a veritable cornucopia of threat groups working in cahoots, far beyond those mentioned in this blog," the researchers said, noting that they discovered the group while conducting research for a book about cyber threat intelligence.

"This single domain led us down a path where we would uncover multiple ransomware attacks, and an APT command-and-control (C2). The path also revealed what we believe to be the infrastructure of an IAB -- Zebra2104. IABs typically gain entry into a victim network then sell that access to the highest bidder on underground forums located in the dark web. Later, the winning bidder will deploy ransomware and/or other financially motivated malware within the victim's organization, depending on the objectives of their campaign."

Their research began in April 2021, when they discovered curious behavior from domains that were identified previously in a Microsoft report on servers that "had been serving malspam that resulted in varying ransomware payloads, such as Dridex, which we were able to corroborate."

A few of the domains had been involved in a phishing campaign that went after state government departments in Australia as well as real estate companies there in September 2020. With the help of other Microsoft reports, the researchers were able to trace the campaigns further to an indicator of compromise of a MountLocker intrusion.

"Sophos has supposed that the MountLocker group has links to, or has in fact become, the recently emerged AstroLocker group. This is because one of the group's ransomware binaries has been linked to a support site of AstroLocker. It's possible that this group is trying to shed any notoriety or baggage that it had garnered through its previous malicious activities," the report added after explaining a number of technical links between the two groups.

The BlackBerry Research & Intelligence team then used WHOIS registrant information and other data that led them to discover ties between the Phobos ransomware and MountLocker.

"This new information presented a bit of a conundrum. If MountLocker owned the infrastructure, then there would be a slim chance of another ransomware operator also working from it (although it has happened before). In several instances, a delay was observed between an initial compromise using Cobalt Strike and further ransomware being deployed. Based on these factors, we can infer that the infrastructure is not that of StrongPity, MountLocker, or Phobos, but of a fourth group that has facilitated the operations of the former three. This is either done by providing initial access, or by providing Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)," the report said.

"An IAB performs the first step in the kill chain of many attacks; this is to say they gain access into a victims' network through exploitation, phishing, or other means. Once they have established a foothold (i.e., a reliable backdoor into the victim network) they then list their access in underground forums on the dark web, advertising their wares in the hopes of finding a prospective buyer. The price for access ranges from as little as \$25, going up to thousands of dollars."

Many IABs base their price on the annual revenue that the victim organization generates, creating a bidding system that allows any group to deploy whatever they want.

"This can be anything from ransomware to infostealers, and everything in between. We believe that our three threat actors -- MountLocker, Phobos and StrongPity, in this instance -- sourced their access through these means," The BlackBerry Research & Intelligence team explained.

The report notes that the domains resolved to IPs that were provided by the same Bulgarian ASN, Neterra LTD. While they wondered whether the access broker was based in Bulgaria, they surmised that the company was simply being taken advantage of.

	<p>The researchers said the "interlinking web of malicious infrastructure" described throughout the report showed that cybercriminal groups mirrored the business world in that they are run like multinational enterprises.</p> <p>"They create partnerships and alliances to help advance their nefarious goals. If anything, it is safe to assume that these 'business partnerships' are going to become even more prevalent in future," the researchers said.</p> <p>"To counter this, it is only via the tracking, documenting, and sharing of intelligence in relation to these groups (and many more) that the wider security community can monitor and defend against them. This cooperation will continue to further our collective understanding of how cybercriminals operate. If the bad guys work together, so should we!"</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Police helicopter surveillance footage leaks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/ddosecrets-police-helicopter-data-leak/?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.wired.com/story/ddosecrets-police-helicopter-data-leak/?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p><b>LAW ENFORCEMENT USE</b> of <a href="#">surveillance drones has proliferated</a> across the United States in recent years, sparking backlash from privacy advocates. But newly leaked aerial surveillance footage from the Dallas Police Department in Texas and what appears to be Georgia's State Patrol underscore the breadth and sophistication of footage captured by another type of aerial police vehicle: helicopters.</p> <p>The transparency activist group Distributed Denial of Secrets, or DDoSecrets, posted a 1.8-terabyte trove of police helicopter footage to its website on Friday. DDoSecrets cofounder Emma Best says that her group doesn't know the identity of the source who shared the data and that no affiliation or motivation for leaking the files was given. The source simply said that the two police departments were storing the data in unsecured cloud infrastructure.</p> <p>DDoSecrets gained notoriety in June 2020 when it published a <a href="#">massive leak of law enforcement data</a> stolen by a hacker associated with Anonymous. The data, dubbed BlueLeaks, included emails, audio, video, and intelligence documents from more than 200 state, local, and federal agencies around the US. The release got DDoSecrets banned from Twitter, and Reddit banned the r/blueleaks subreddit. The group, which essentially sees itself as a <a href="#">successor to Wikileaks</a>, has also courted controversy by publishing leaks of sensitive data <a href="#">taken from the far-right platform Gab</a> and a trove <a href="#">stolen in a ransomware attack</a> on a gas pipeline services firm.</p> <p>The footage the group released Friday, samples of which were viewed by WIRED, shows helicopters operating during the day and at night, capturing everything from vistas high overhead to cars lined up at a McDonald's drive-through, and individuals standing in their yards or on local streets. The leak illustrates the inherent risk of collecting and retaining sensitive footage that could be breached.</p> <p>"This is exactly one of the things that people are constantly warning about, especially when it comes to government surveillance and corporate data mining," Best told WIRED in a text message interview. "Not only is the surveillance itself problematic and worrisome, but the data is not handled in the ideal conditions we're always promised."</p> <p>The vast majority of the leaked footage appears to come from the Dallas Police Department. In response to three screenshots from the leak, DPD public information officer Brian Martinez wrote in an email that "the pictures show screenshots of video from the department helicopter." He declined to comment about DPD's data storage practices, including how long the department retains helicopter surveillance videos. "Due to security measures, we are not able to discuss data storage," he wrote. "All video from the helicopter is available to any person requesting the video through the Open Records Act."</p> <p>A smaller subset of the data appears to come from the greater Atlanta area. The Atlanta Police Department told WIRED that the footage was not from its jurisdiction. Georgia State Patrol did not respond to WIRED's request for comment by publication. GSP's Aviation Division has 15 helicopters and one</p>

Cessna 182 airplane used for operations that include search-and-rescue missions. On [its website](#) the division lists other activities, including “aerial photography” and “aerial surveillance.”

“It’s a crystal-clear example of why mass surveillance makes our society less safe, not more safe,” says Evan Greer, deputy director of the digital rights group Fight for the Future, of the data leak. “Both corporations and governments are terrible at safeguarding the sensitive data that they collect.”

Police drones have gotten a lot of attention lately, because they represent a new generation of aerial vehicles capable of particularly stealthy surveillance and new types of behavior, including flying indoors. In contrast, law enforcement agencies have used helicopters in aerial surveys and monitoring for decades. But the footage released by DDoSecrets illustrates how effective helicopter-mounted cameras can be at capturing extremely sharp and detailed video close to the ground. Helicopters can also carry heavier surveillance equipment than what can be affixed to basic quadcopters or other types of low-cost drones.

“People think of police helicopters as traffic copters, but they’re so much more than that,” DDoSecrets’ Best wrote. “They carry technology that lets police watch people who have no idea they’re being watched. It’s important for people to understand what police technology is already capable of and what it could be capable of soon. There can’t be informed discussions or decisions otherwise.”

Such broad use of helicopter surveillance augments privacy advocates’ concerns about drones. UAVs are much cheaper and easier to purchase and operate than helicopters and can still be outfitted with an extensive array of sensors.

“Camera and zoom tech is getting cheaper and lighter all the time,” says Matthew Feeney, director of the Cato Institute’s Project on Emerging Technologies. “We need to always think of aerial vehicles like drones as a platform for other surveillance tools including cameras, stingrays, thermal imaging, and facial recognition software.”

In the case of the leaked helicopter video, Best notes that much of the footage is time-stamped from 2019 and that retention limits should be a crucial priority for police departments.

Similar [discussions](#) have come up about the need for deletion policies when dealing with police body cam footage. It’s possible that some of the leaked helicopter footage was retained because it is still relevant to an active investigation, but many of the files capture hours in real time and focus on disparate, seemingly unconnected activity, places, and people.

Privacy advocates particularly emphasize the stakes of securing aerial police surveillance data, given that such footage could be valuable in a number of ways for stalkers, attackers seeking materials for blackmail, domestic or foreign terrorist groups, or those conducting espionage operations.

Some of the leaked Dallas and Atlanta footage reflects the types of uses you might expect from police helicopters: crowd surveillance over stadium parking lots on game day, for example, or officers pulling a car over. But other scenes in the footage have a more aimless, roving quality.

“I haven’t heard specifically about helicopters being used in this way,” Fight for the Future’s Greer says. “It’s totally unsurprising, but it is alarming. At least in an urban setting, you think of police helicopters showing up when there’s something specific going on, but anecdotally you also hear about them being used for intimidation purposes, like flying really low over neighborhoods where residents are predominantly people of color.”

In Minneapolis, for example, residents have [consistently reported](#) intense police helicopter traffic overhead ever since the protests and riots in summer 2020 that followed George Floyd’s death. And though helicopters are a familiar technology, their use in law enforcement surveillance comes with long-standing privacy concerns. In 2004, a New York Police Department helicopter scoping out an unpermitted mass evening bicycle ride in Manhattan captured almost [four minutes of night-vision-enabled footage](#) of a couple having sex on a secluded penthouse terrace.



HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Mobile phishing energy sector surges</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2021/11/08/mobile-phishing-exposure-2021/?web_view=true">https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2021/11/08/mobile-phishing-exposure-2021/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Mobile phishing exposure surged 161% within the energy industry between the second half of 2020 and the first half of 2021, a Lookout report reveals.</p> <p>The research indicates that organizations in the energy industry experienced the following between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20% of energy employees were exposed to a mobile phishing attack in the first half of 2021, a 161% increase from the second half of 2020.</li><li>• 17.2% of all cyberattacks originating on mobile endpoints targeted energy organizations, making the industry the biggest target of cybercriminals and <a href="#">nation-state sponsored attackers</a>.</li><li>• The average mobile app threat exposure rate was 7.6% — nearly double the average of all other industries combined.</li><li>• 56% of Android users were exposed to nearly three hundred exploitable vulnerabilities by continuing to run out-of-date versions of Android OS.</li><li>• Riskware and vulnerabilities were the cause of 95% of mobile app threats.</li><li>• Regional mobile phishing exposure rates: North America (11.2%), APAC (13.2%) and EMEA (15.8%).</li><li>• EMEA and APAC employees were 41% and 18% more likely to experience a mobile phishing attack than their North American peers.</li></ul> <p>Energy organizations provide the infrastructure essential for the safety and well being of society. Recent events such as the <a href="#">Colonial Pipeline</a> breach demonstrate that the energy industry is particularly vulnerable to cyberattacks.</p> <p><b>Securing mobile endpoints to prevent mobile phishing threats</b></p> <p>Bad actors phish and exploit vulnerabilities in mobile endpoints to circumvent legacy security systems to gain access to corporate infrastructure, steal sensitive data and extort money.</p> <p><a href="#">Securing mobile endpoints</a> that employees use to do their jobs is imperative to protect enterprise data as iOS, Android and ChromeOS devices are increasingly essential to digital transformation initiatives. Protecting against mobile phishing and app threats enables energy organizations to prevent cyberattackers who want to steal credentials and data, or halt operations with ransomware.</p> <p>“As the energy industry modernizes and relies more heavily on mobile devices and cloud solutions, these insights into mobile phishing and app threats can help organizations strengthen their security program,” said <a href="#">Stephen Banda</a>, Senior Manager of Security Solutions at <a href="#">Lookout</a> and the author of the report.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Report: key sectors supply chain targeted</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxbusiness.com/technology/supply-chain-attack-cyber-underground-sensitive-company-data">https://www.foxbusiness.com/technology/supply-chain-attack-cyber-underground-sensitive-company-data</a>
GIST	<p>Key sectors in the supply chain are being targeted by <a href="#">cybercriminals</a>, a new report says.</p> <p>Against a backdrop of extreme volatility in the supply chain of goods, cyber criminals on the dark web have been peddling sensitive information that can provide access to supply chain companies’ computers, according to a report from cyber intelligence firm <a href="#">Intel 471</a>.</p> <p>Underground cyber brokers have been selling credentials – used to access computers – belonging to companies that operate air, ground and maritime cargo transport on several continents and are "responsible for moving billions of dollars worth of goods around the world," Intel 471 said.</p>



Cyber thieves have gotten hold of the credentials by leveraging vulnerabilities in remote access technologies such as Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP), Virtual Private networks (VPN), Citrix, and [SonicWall](#), among others, Intel 471 said.

"We've witnessed ransomware attacks on the shipping industry throughout the year, which has undoubtedly put a constraint on companies that are already stretched thin due to the pandemic," Intel 471 researchers told FOX Business.

As of 2020, all four of the largest global maritime shipping companies had been [hit](#) by cyber attacks. Some of the "advertisements" on the cybercrime underground observed by Intel 471 include:

-In October 2021, a newcomer to a well-known cybercrime forum advertised access to the network of a U.S.-based freight forwarding company, claiming access to local administrator rights and access to 20 computers on the company's network.

-Also in October, a new cybercrime player on a different cybercrime forum claimed access to a Malaysian logistics company.

-In September 2021, an actor with ties to the FiveHands ransomware group said it had access to hundreds of companies, including a U.K.-based logistics company. "It's most likely that access was obtained through a SonicWall vulnerability, given that FiveHands is known to use that access to launch its ransomware attacks," Intel 471 said.

-In August 2021, one actor known for working with groups that deploy Conti ransomware claimed access to corporate networks of a U.S.-based transportation management and trucking software supplier and a U.S.-based commodity transportation services company.

-In July 2021, individuals said they had gained access to a network owned by a Japanese container transportation and shipping company. The access being advertised included the company's credentials "in a dump of approximately 50 companies," Intel 471 said.

These kinds of attacks are having a profound [impact](#) on the shipping and logistics industries, Bryan Hornung, CEO of Xact IT Solutions Inc., told FOX Business, pointing to another attack in July, where hackers locked up Transnet SOC, a South Africa company that oversees operations for the country's main seaports.

In another high-profile supply chain attack, Australian transport and logistics company Toll Group – that boasts 40,000 employees and operates a distribution network across over 50 countries – was the [victim](#) of a ransomware attack in May of last year, severely disrupting their operations and the supply chain in that country.

"What we are seeing right now on the dark web ... the chatter ... is a precursor to attacks occurring within the next 90 days. So it would not surprise me if we see an uptick in ransomware attacks against shipping and logistics companies leading into the holidays," Hornung said.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Hackers apologize to Arab royal families</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/n7nw8m/conti-ransomware-hackers-apologize-to-arab-royal-families-for-leaking-their-data">https://www.vice.com/en/article/n7nw8m/conti-ransomware-hackers-apologize-to-arab-royal-families-for-leaking-their-data</a>
GIST	<p>In October, the infamous ransomware gang known as Conti released thousands of files stolen from the UK jewelry store Graff.</p> <p>Now, the hackers would like the world to know that they regret their decision, perhaps in part because they released files belonging to very powerful people.</p>

Among the data Conti leaked, there were sensitive files belonging to celebrities like David Beckham, Oprah Winfrey, and Donald Trump, [according to The Daily Mail](#). There was also, according to the hackers themselves, information belonging to the UAE, Qatar, and Saudi royal families.

And the hackers really don't want to piss them off.

"We found that our sample data was not properly reviewed before being uploaded to the blog," the hackers wrote in an announcement published on Thursday. "Conti guarantees that any information pertaining to members of Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar families will be deleted without any exposure and review."

"Our Team apologizes to His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman and any other members of the Royal Families whose names were mentioned in the publication for any inconvenience," the hackers added.

The hackers also said that other than publishing the data on their site, they did not sell it or trade, and that from now on they will "implement a more rigid data review process for any future operations."

Conti did not immediately respond to a request for comment sent via its official site.

Allan Liska, a researcher at cybersecurity firm Recorded Future who tracks ransomware, said that the hackers must have gotten scared of potential retaliation from the Arab states.

"Bluntly, UAE sends assassination teams to deal with people they don't like. The US and UK don't do that (any more). Even ransomware groups are subject to political pressure. My guess is that they had a conversation with someone in the Kremlin who told that this was a bad idea and so they removed the data," Liska told Motherboard in an online chat. "This is their way of covering it up."

But Brett Callow, a researcher who focuses on ransomware at Emsisoft, is not so sure.

"The nutso ramblings of a drunk? Either that or a statement intended to confuse and obfuscate. Smoke and mirrors. Some analysts have speculated that the apology is the result of pressure from the Russian government, but that seems unlikely," he told Motherboard in an email. "A public apology like this would simply cause further embarrassment to the individuals it names. Also, Conti has hit Saudi-based companies in the past, so obviously has no problems operating in that part of the world."

The hackers, in any case, said they will continue to publish data obtained from Graff, especially "as much Graff's information as possible regarding the financial declarations made by the US-UK-EU Neo-liberal plutocracy, which engages in obnoxiously expensive purchases when their nations are crumbling under the economic crisis, unemployment, and COVID."

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HEADLINE	11/06 Teen rescued; TikTok 'trouble' hand gesture
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2021/11/06/teen-rescued-tik-tok-hand-gesture-domestic-violence/5771636247307/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2021/11/06/teen-rescued-tik-tok-hand-gesture-domestic-violence/5771636247307/</a>
GIST	<p>Nov. 6 (UPI) -- A missing North Carolina girl has been found by law enforcement after she used a hand signal popularized on social media platform Tik Tok to indicate she was in trouble.</p> <p>Kentucky's Laurel County Sheriff's Office said they received a tip on Thursday that a female passenger in a Toyota passenger car was making the gesture representing violence at home and calling for help.</p> <p>Developed by the Canadian Women's Foundation during last year's pandemic-induced social isolation, <a href="#">the discrete gesture</a> is a hand up, with the palm extended and the thumb tucked inside. The fingers are then folded over the thumb.</p>

	<p>The teen had been reported missing from Asheville, N.C. by her parents on Tuesday. After investigators located the vehicle, they determined she was the missing teen.</p> <p>Sheriff's deputies arrested the vehicle's driver, James Herbert Brick, 61 of Cherokee, N.C. after finding a phone that contained sexual images of a juvenile female. Brick was charged with unlawful imprisonment and possession of material showing a sex performance by a minor over the age of 12 but under age 18. He is being held in the Laurel County correctional center.</p> <p>According to the sheriff's office, the teen girl said Brick took her through North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky and into Ohio.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 QR codes proof Covid vaccination</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/coronavirus/article/washington-state-proof-of-vaccination-QR-code-16596239.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/coronavirus/article/washington-state-proof-of-vaccination-QR-code-16596239.php</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Washington</a> residents can now receive a state-provided QR code that will serve as proof that they've been vaccinated against the <a href="#">coronavirus</a>, which should help streamline the process of getting into businesses or events that <a href="#">require proof of vaccination</a> to enter.</p> <p>Users can receive their QR code by visiting the state Department of Health's WA Verify <a href="#">webpage</a>. They will be asked to enter their first and last name, their date of birth and their mobile phone number or email address. They'll also be asked to create a four-digit pin number they'll need to enter when accessing their QR code.</p> <p>If the state has your vaccine record on file, it will send you a link to your individualized QR code via text or email. You need to click the link and enter the four-digit pin you created to access your code. Once done, you can screenshot, download or print the code, which can then be presented at businesses or events that require proof of vaccination to enter.</p> <p>Your vaccine provider is the one who uploads your information to the state's immunization registry. The state will match the information you provided on its website to the information uploaded to its registry. If your record is not found — the author of this article received a link in seconds — the state recommends trying a different mobile phone number or email address.</p> <p>If your record still isn't found, the state recommends contacting your vaccination provider to see if there are any inconsistencies between your information and the information they uploaded to the registry. You can also contact the state to see if your record exists. To do so, call 360-236-3595 or email <a href="mailto:WAISRecords@doh.wa.gov">WAISRecords@doh.wa.gov</a>.</p> <p>If you had family members that were vaccinated using the same phone number or email address, you should enter each person's information individually — using the same number or address — and you will receive a different QR code for each person.</p> <p>Other forms of vaccine proof — such as a CDC-issued vaccination card or a photo of one, a Certificate of COVID-19 Vaccination from <a href="#">MYIRmobile</a>, a printed Certificate of Immunization Status from the state's Immunization Registry, or a note from your medical provider — are still acceptable forms of proof in Washington, according to the state Department of Health.</p> <p>Proof of vaccination <a href="#">is required at nearly every indoor business or event in King County</a>. It's <a href="#">also required at large events in Washington</a>. However, a person is allowed to skip those requirements if they received a negative COVID-19 test at least 72 hours prior to the time of entry.</p> <p>Gov. Jay Inslee is not yet considering mandating similar requirements for indoor businesses statewide, but has said it's not off the table.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/05 Record: data breaches, ransomware attacks
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/washington-sets-record-for-data-breaches-and-ransomware-attacks-says-ag-ferguson/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/washington-sets-record-for-data-breaches-and-ransomware-attacks-says-ag-ferguson/</a>
GIST	<p>So far in 2021, 6.3 million notices of data breaches have been sent to Washingtonians — by far the largest number since Attorney General Bob Ferguson’s office began tracking this.</p> <p>The number of data breaches reported to Ferguson’s office also skyrocketed to 280, blowing past the previous record of 78 and last year’s total of 60, according to the report.</p> <p>The previous record for breach notices was set in 2018, with 3.5 million notices sent, the report says.</p> <p>The report also identifies a tremendous spike in cyberattacks and a growing threat from ransomware incidents, a type of cyberattack that uses malicious code to hold data hostage in hopes of receiving a ransom payment. More than 150 ransomware incidents were recorded in 2021 — more than the previous five years combined, according to the report.</p> <p>“We publish this report because Washingtonians are best able to safeguard their data when they are aware of the threats — and the threats have never been greater,” Ferguson said.</p> <p>The Attorney General’s Office said it receives no funding to publish the report but does it as a public service to provide Washingtonians with critical information to help them safeguard their data.</p> <p>The report includes recommendations to policymakers, including expanding the definition of personal information to include individual tax identification numbers as well as the last four digits of a Social Security number.</p> <p>According to the report, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the threat because Washingtonians are increasingly relying on digital and online services that collect user data to conduct business, go to school, find entertainment and communicate with friends and family.</p> <p>This increase in online activity may create more opportunities for cybercriminals to steal personal information, and it underlines the importance of Washington’s data breach notification laws.</p> <p>Ferguson’s office said his yearslong push to require companies to report data breaches and to hold them accountable led to a 2019 investigation of a data breach at Premera Blue Cross and resulted in the company paying \$10 million.</p> <p>Also that year, his office announced that Equifax would pay more than half-a-billion dollars because of a 2017 data breach affecting nearly 150 million people nationwide.</p> <p>Since 2014, Ferguson’s office has required several corporations with large data breaches that impacted Washingtonians’ privacy — <a href="#">Premera</a>, <a href="#">Equifax</a>, <a href="#">Uber</a> and <a href="#">Target Corporation</a> — to enter into legally enforceable agreements to improve their data security.</p> <p>The public can access the attorney general’s <a href="#">database of breaches here</a>.</p>
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## Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	11/07 JBLM troops return; aiding Afghan refugees
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/jblm-soldiers-return-home-from-fort-mccoy-operation-helping-afghan-refugees">https://www.q13fox.com/news/jblm-soldiers-return-home-from-fort-mccoy-operation-helping-afghan-refugees</a>
GIST	TACOMA, Wash. - Roughly 80 soldiers have returned to <a href="#">Joint Base Lewis-McChord</a> , coming home after helping Afghan refugees during <a href="#">Operation Allies Welcome</a> .

After the [Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021](#), President Biden ordered the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to start helping vulnerable Afghans relocate to the United States. As part of Operation Allies Welcome, hundreds of soldiers were deployed to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, including members of JBLM's 555th Engineer Brigade.

On Sunday, 80 of those troops touched down back home.

"The Triple Nickel Brigade was proud to join U.S. Army North, U.S. Northern Command, and the Department of Defense team, in supporting the Department of Homeland Security with this mission," said Col. Jeff Hall. "Our Soldiers had a tremendous opportunity to give back to our Afghan partners who sacrificed so much for our nation."

The operation sees DHS providing temporary housing, sustainment and support for Afghan refugees across eight Department of Defense locations, including Fort McCoy.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Afghanistan polio vaccine campaign</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/who-unicef-launch-afghan-polio-vaccine-campaign-with-taliban-backing-2021-11-08/">https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/who-unicef-launch-afghan-polio-vaccine-campaign-with-taliban-backing-2021-11-08/</a>
GIST	<p>KABUL, Nov 8 (Reuters) - The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations children's agency kicked off a polio vaccination campaign in Afghanistan on Monday, the first nationwide campaign to fight the disease in three years.</p> <p>Naikwali Shah Momim, the National Emergency Operations Coordinator for the polio programme at Afghanistan's health ministry, told Reuters the campaign had started in various parts of the country on Monday, but added there were several hurdles around a shortage of trained staff.</p> <p>The campaign, which is aimed at reaching over 3 million children, had received Taliban backing, which would allow teams to reach children in previously inaccessible parts of the country, the WHO said.</p> <p>"The urgency with which the Taliban leadership wants the polio campaign to proceed demonstrates a joint commitment to maintain the health system and restart essential immunizations to avert further outbreaks of preventable diseases," said Ahmed Al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, in a statement.</p> <p>However, Momim said that more training was needed for teams in remote areas, so the programme would initially start in places such as Kabul.</p> <p>Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan are the last countries in the world with endemic polio, an incurable and highly infectious disease transmitted through sewage that can cause crippling paralysis in young children.</p> <p>Polio has been virtually eliminated globally through a decades-long inoculation drive. But insecurity, inaccessible terrain, mass displacement and suspicion of outside interference have hampered mass vaccination in Afghanistan and some areas of Pakistan.</p> <p>Several polio workers have been killed by gunmen in eastern Afghanistan this year, though it was not clear who was behind the attacks.</p> <p>According to WHO figures compiled before the collapse of the Western-backed government in August, there was one reported case of the one wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in Afghanistan in 2021, compared with 56 in 2020.</p>

	Until the disease is eliminated completely, it remains a threat to human health in all countries, especially those with vulnerable health systems because of the risk of importing the disease, according to health experts.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Physical attacks on electricity infrastructure</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/physical-attacks-on-electricity-infrastructure-extremist-messaging-plots-and-action/">https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/infrastructure-security/physical-attacks-on-electricity-infrastructure-extremist-messaging-plots-and-action/</a>
GIST	<p>This week’s revelation about a drone’s close encounter with a Pennsylvania power substation joins other troubling indicators of the physical threat to energy infrastructure as expressed by extremists of varying ideologies.</p> <p>A Joint Intelligence Bulletin from DHS, FBI and the National Counterterrorism Center to law enforcement said that on July 16, 2020, a small, four-rotor off-the-shelf drone was discovered on the top of a building next to the power substation. Nylon ropes hanging from the drone dangled a two-foot curved piece of copper wire, and analysis of the device indicated that this was likely intended to short circuit the substation in “the first known instance of a modified UAS likely being used in the United States to specifically target energy infrastructure.”</p> <p>The operator of the drone still has not been identified; the UAS camera, memory storage card, and all identifiable markings had been removed, indicating that the operator was trying to avoid identification and was also likely “within visual line of sight of the intended target” while flying the drone. The bulletin notes that the incident, which did not result in any disruption to the power grid, was first included in an August 2020 DHS report disseminated on the Homeland Security Information Network and was resurrected to raise awareness about the potential capability of modified drones.</p> <p>The bulletin cited other too-close-for-comfort drone operations near critical infrastructure and stressed that while these incidents could be the result of drone operators who lack awareness of their flight paths, potential illicit activity cannot be ruled out and targeting of other critical infrastructure facilities using UAS is expected.</p> <p>The day after ABC News first reported on the bulletin, a familiar meme emphasized that power stations are a vulnerable and enticing target for violent extremists and accelerationists.</p> <p>One Twitter account that gives “mad respect” to the Nazis for mass murder at Auschwitz, glorifies Oklahomas City bomber Timothy McVeigh and Olympic Park bomber Eric Rudolph, and spouts other racist and antisemitic content posted a map of power grid interconnections Thursday, writing that the fragility of the grid is “convenient for foul play” and recommending a specific portable band saw for cutting metal, and separately posting images of power lines, a cell phone tower, a tanker truck and a bridge while citing founder of the <a href="#">eco-fascist Pine Tree Party</a> Mike Ma — a meme commonly seen across social media and online forums. “Electricity is a ghost, but one you can catch and kill... Do not become the sort of person who gets really good at blowing power stations up while never getting caught,” Ma wrote in his 2019 book <i>Harassment Architecture</i>.</p> <p>Another commonly referenced attack is the 2013 incident in which multiple gunmen opened fire on the Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s Metcalf Transmission Substation south of San Jose, Calif., causing more than \$15 million in damage to 17 transformers. It also appears to have been a likely reference for one group accused of plotting an attack on the power grid.</p> <p><b>Substation Plot to ‘Cause Chaos for the Country’</b></p> <p>In August, the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Eastern District of North Carolina announced a superseding indictment levying additional charges of targeting energy facilities against Paul James Kryscuk, Liam Collins, Jordan Duncan, and Joseph Maurino; Collins and Duncan are former Marines who were previously stationed at Camp Lejeune along with Justin Hermanson, an active-duty Marine named in the original indictments focusing on weapons charges, and Collins and Kryscuk are alleged to have been</p>



members of the now-defunct Iron March neo-Nazi online forum. Duncan worked as an Air Force and then Navy contractor after leaving active duty. Maurino is a member of the Army National Guard.

On Iron March, Collins discussed forming “a modern day SS” in which all members were “going to be required to have served in a nation’s military.”

“I’ll be in the USMC for 4 years while my comrades work on the groups physical formation,” Collins wrote, according to the indictment. “...It will take years to gather all the experience and intelligence that we need to utilize – but that’s what makes it fun.”

The Justice Department says that in early 2017 Kryscuk, in discussion with Collins, wrote that the group’s “first order of business is knocking down The System, mounting it and smashing it’s [sic] face until it has been beaten past the point of death... eventually we will have to bring the rifles out and go to work.” Then would come “buying property in remote areas that are already predominantly white and right leaning, networking with locals, training, farming, and stockpiling” and preparing for “a takeover of local government and industry.” As the size of their force and territory grew, the plan continued, they would then attack urban areas in “a ground war very reminiscent of Iraq.”

The indictment describes the manufacturing and illegal acquisition of weapons, collecting information on “various weaponry, to include firearms, explosives, and even nerve toxins,” surveillance of Black Lives Matter protests and discussions about attacking protesters, and members meeting in Idaho to train together. One recruitment video from training in July 2020 showed participants in Atomwaffen Division masks and giving Nazi salutes.

In the third superseding indictment filed on Aug. 18, Kryscuk, Collins, Duncan, and Maurino are alleged to have discussed attacking the power grid both “for the purpose of creating general chaos and to provide cover and ease of escape in those areas in which they planned to undertake assassinations and other desired operations to further their goal of creating a white ethno-state.” The four also “discussed using homemade thermite to burn through and destroy power transformers.”

The four “researched, discussed and critically reviewed at length a previous attack on the power grid by an unknown group,” the indictment states. “That group used assault-style rifles in an attempt to explode a power substation.” That attack is not named but can be assumed to be the Metcalf attack; surveillance and re-enactment videos can be found online.

Hermanson is alleged to have shown an individual a re-enactment of the attack and stated “that if his group would manage to blow up one of these substations, it would take down the entire regional or coastal power grid and cause chaos for the country.” Hermanson was allegedly asked by Collins to purchase Tannerite, which can be used to make thermite.

In October 2020, the four named in the superseding indictment “discussed their plans to take out the power grid,” including “a handwritten list of approximately one dozen intersections and places in Idaho and surrounding states” that “contained a transformer, substation, or other component of the power grid for the northwest United States, that if destroyed could cause damage exceeding \$100,000 to the power grid.” Collins, Kryscuk and Duncan were arrested that month.

### **Critical Infrastructure in the Crosshairs**

A National Socialist Order (formerly known as the neo-Nazi Atomwaffen Division) video posted on Telegram earlier this year used simple animation to encourage followers to identify allies and enemies and finally act – and the first “act” depicted an individual chucking an incendiary device at a power substation that subsequently bursts into flames. The video, which also depicted a vehicle attack on protesters and an assassination of a person behind a podium, encouraged followers to educate themselves with books such as *The Turner Diaries* before attacking.

The Base, another neo-Nazi group, in New Jersey distributed a 2019 propaganda image showing two members saluting in front of power lines.



One social media account that was sharing accelerationist memes and references to the Boogaloo Bois posted an animated meme depicting a masked shooter in front of a power substation to the tune of “Electric Avenue.” Another meme posted on YouTube in April 2020 and circulated in other online forums asked people to “repost if you would dismantle the electrical transmission grid with your male followers” and included a short video showing an unknown individual blowtorching the leg of a transmission tower.

Anti-government propaganda also has included memes encouraging wreaking vast destruction on infrastructure and civic institutions. “Killdozer” memes circulate online that reference the 2004 incident in which Marvin John Heemeyer demolished numerous buildings with a modified bulldozer in Granby, Colo. The memes are popular with anti-government extremists and Boogaloo, and were shared by Steven Carrillo, the airman who said he wanted to start a civil war and was arrested in the May 2020 killing of a Federal Protective Service security contractor in Oakland.

Conspiracy theorists online also have claimed that there is a suspicious, nefarious, or “false flag” nature to grid security exercises that are announced and conducted by government entities in conjunction with private-sector stakeholders. A worrisome threat with conspiracy theory extremism is the possibility that a believer may feel driven to stop something they think is bad, and could take violent action against one of these exercises or the infrastructure itself.

### **Islamist Groups Target Power**

The first issue of al-Qaeda’s English-language *One Ummah* magazine published in 2019 specifically encouraged hacking the power grid but acknowledged this would require tech capability and investment, training, and appropriate recruiting of skilled jihadists. Regardless, adherents were encouraged to “focus their energies on creative ways of dismantling the enemy’s electronic and cyber defenses.”

But Islamist extremist propaganda has also urged physical attacks on critical infrastructure. A 2019 online threat from ISIS supporters depicted a faceless figure in a black hoodie with a faint Islamic State flag standing in front of transmission towers and lines holding a bomb. Along the power lines was the phrase “Just Terror” — the ISIS slogan for lone jihadist operations — and blood-spattered ground. The poster directed jihadists to “make a surprise for the Crusaders.”

Some of the encouragement that could lead inspired followers to attack the energy sector is more indirect, with ISIS depicting complex attacks that can cripple major metropolitan areas and encouraging would-be jihadists to think outside of the box and try less common tactics, targets that have downstream effects beyond the initial attack (such as one call from ISIS supporters to attack gas stations or oil pipelines), or take advantage of their unique skillsets or access — such as lone actors who are employed at sensitive or critical infrastructure facilities.

But ISIS has turned talk into execution with attacks on the energy sector in Iraq — a region where the group has also done test runs with drones for reconnaissance purposes, filming attacks, and IED delivery. In August, the Iraqi military launched a special operation against ISIS after attacks on transmission towers that supplied power to part of Baghdad’s water system — using one critical infrastructure sector to cripple another.

This followed months of attacks on power lines in a country that relies heavily on air conditioning. In June, ISIS claimed responsibility for a Katyusha rocket attack that damaged the generating unit at the Salah al-Din Power Station in Samarra. In July, a trio of high-voltage lines in Kirkuk were blown up with remotely detonated devices. Dozens of transmission towers were damaged or destroyed over the summer.

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HEADLINE	11/07 US citizens vs FBI: illegal surveillance?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/nov/07/us-citizens-fbi-government-surveillance-guilty-9-11-muslims">https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/nov/07/us-citizens-fbi-government-surveillance-guilty-9-11-muslims</a>
GIST	On Monday, the US supreme court will hear arguments in a case which could determine whether the US government faces accountability for its mass surveillance of Muslim Americans after 9/11.

The nine justices will be asked to decide on whether Muslim US citizens who were subjected to undercover surveillance by a paid informant at their southern [California](#) mosque can receive redress through the courts.

Sheikh Yassir Fazaga, Ali Malik and Yasser Abdel Rahim, the three plaintiffs, argue that they and thousands of other Muslims were targeted because of their religion, and the federal authorities who subjected them to such unconstitutional treatment should answer for that.

Lawyers for the government [will counter](#) that the case should be dismissed, as litigating it would reveal intelligence about federal anti-terrorism operations that would be harmful to national security. Information on who they were investigating and why, as well as details of the FBI's sources and methods, should remain confidential on grounds that they are "state secrets".

Ahilan Arulanantham, a human rights lawyer at UCLA who will be arguing [FBI v Fazaga](#) for the plaintiffs on Monday, told reporters that the question for the court was simple: "Will the people we represent ever get their day in court? Are the courts open to protect this community's religious freedoms, or can the government slam the doors shut whenever it claims to be acting in the name of national security?"

At the heart of the case is Craig Monteilh, a fitness instructor convicted for fraud, who was taken on by the [FBI](#) as an informant five years after 9/11 in "Operation Flex" in which he surveilled mosques in Irvine, California.

Ali Malik, one of the three plaintiffs in the Fazaga case, vividly remembers when Monteilh first visited the Islamic Center of Irvine in July 2006. The informant presented himself as a person of French and Syrian descent wanting to convert to Islam.

"He was not someone you'd forget," Malik told the Guardian. "Physically, he's very dominant— a big guy, a body builder. He's massive, shaved head, tattoos – so he didn't look like the majority of constituents at the center."

Malik, a US citizen from birth, was 22 and a student when Monteilh appeared. Malik said that he and his fellow worshippers were excited to welcome into their community the new convert, who took on the name Farouk al-Aziz.

"We had never experienced an undercover provocateur," Malik said. "We had no reason to believe that the FBI was involved in that activity. In fact, the FBI had come to our mosque, looked into our eyes, and assured us that they were not spying on us."

Malik became Monteilh's mentor, teaching him how to pray. For more than a year, they met regularly, sharing personal details of their lives and working out at the gym together.

Malik recalls becoming uneasy about Monteilh when he began asking questions about violent jihad, becoming increasingly incessant on the subject.

"He would say, 'What about jihad? What about this?' I had only one response: 'Vigilante violence is not okay in Islam. You need to focus on how to pray and how to establish a connection with God.'"

Malik picked up the same concerns from others in the mosque – Monteilh was inciting violence among them. "He was so assertive, and he spoke with such urgency that he was really intimidating."

The last conversation they had was so disturbing that Malik went to the imam of the mosque and told him Monteilh was potentially violent and a danger to the community. Eventually, a restraining order was taken out preventing Monteilh from visiting the mosque.

Ironically, the mosque also informed the FBI about their concerns. The FBI said it would deal with the situation.

In 2009 it became public that Monteilh was working for the FBI and had been trying to entrap law-abiding American Muslims with his talk of violent jihad. It emerged that he had gathered hundreds of phone numbers, thousands of email addresses, and hours of video and audio recordings inside mosques, homes and businesses associated with Muslims.

Monteilh later admitted his role, [telling the Guardian in 2012](#) that his FBI handlers had authorized him to have sex with Muslim women and record their pillow talk. “They said, if it would enhance the intelligence, to go ahead and have sex. So I did,” he said.

That same year, Monteilh told NPR that he told two congregants: “we should bomb something”.

Malik joined his co-plaintiffs, Sheikh Yassir Fazaga and Yasser Abdel Rahim, in filing a lawsuit against the FBI. In 2011, with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and the Council on American-Islamic Relations of Greater Los Angeles, they filed a federal class-action lawsuit accusing the government of surveilling Muslim Americans in violation of their constitutional rights.

The invocation of “state secrets” in the Fazaga case was the first time in recent American history that the privilege was invoked to dismiss a lawsuit brought by an American citizen concerning domestic law enforcement.

Monday’s hearing is the second time the supreme court will consider the application of “state secrets” this term. Last month, the justices considered whether the Guantánamo detainee [Abu Zubaydah](#) should be able to question two former CIA contractors about the brutal torture he was subjected to at a “black site” in Poland.

In the Fazaga case, the nation’s highest court will adjudicate on whether the lawsuit against FBI’s surveillance can proceed under the Foreign Intelligence [Surveillance](#) Act. This would allow the case to be heard in a federal district court with part of the proceedings conducted in private to safeguard sensitive intelligence.

Malik and his fellow plaintiffs will be in Washington on Monday to listen to the arguments, although they will not be allowed into the courtroom under Covid restrictions. He told the Guardian that the hearing was “probably the most important thing, other than getting married and having children, in my entire life”.

He said the lawsuit boiled down to a simple premise: “Can I practice my religion without having to feel I’m doing anything wrong?”

As for the government’s claim of “state secrets”, Malik said: “It’s terrifying to know that the government can conduct illegal activity against me and that I, as a citizen, can’t hold them to account. All I’m asking for is the establishment of the rule of law – for the constitution of the United States to be upheld.”

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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Witnesses to the end: Marines’ Abbey Gate</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/us/politics/afghanistan-war-marines.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/us/politics/afghanistan-war-marines.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Marines at Abbey Gate were racing against time. The crowd at the gate didn’t know it, but the Marines had been told to close it at 6 p.m.</p> <p>That left just 30 minutes for Capt. Geoff Ball, 33, commander of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines’ Ghost Company, to pluck out a few more people with that elusive combination of affiliation and luck that would get them onto a plane out of Afghanistan. Just 30 more minutes for Cpl. Hunter Lopez, 22, to grab another child out of the sewage canal where hundreds jostled. Just 30 minutes for Capt. Andres Rodriguez, 31, to scan the crowd for men who fit the descriptions in dozens of text messages from people in the United States trying to save their interpreters.</p>

The plan for the final “retrograde” of the American war in Afghanistan was clear: On Aug. 26, the British troops stationed at the nearby Baron Hotel would fall back. A few hours later, the 82nd Airborne would take up the Marines’ forward positions, allowing Ghost Company to fold into the terminal. And, finally, the 82nd Airborne would fall back to the airport, to waiting planes, ending America’s longest war.

The Afghans, who had been on their feet for hours, were passing out in the heat from dehydration. They had been coming by bus, car and foot for 10 straight days, assembling near the jersey barriers, or standing knee-deep in the foul-smelling canal near Abbey Gate, a main entryway to the airport.

Corporal Lopez saw a little girl getting crushed and plunged into the mass of people to get her. At around 5:45 p.m., Ghost Company’s Maxton “Doc” Soviak, a 22-year-old Navy corpsman, got a call that someone had fainted next to the jersey barrier; he and another medic went to help.

As it turned out, the Marines at Abbey Gate didn’t have 30 minutes left; they had 18. A suicide bomber detonated at 5:48 p.m.

More than 100,000 Marines served in Afghanistan over the 20-year war; 474 of them died. They fought in Marja in 2010, only to see the Taliban re-establish themselves there weeks later. They stepped on roadside bombs in Helmand Province. They sometimes committed crimes or crossed the line, including urinating on dead combatants and burning Qurans. Some of the 170 Afghans who died after the suicide bomb went off at Kabul airport may have been killed by American troops, including Marines, who in the chaos believed they were returning fire.

But the Marines at Abbey Gate were also witnesses to the end of America’s longest war. During the frenzied last days of August, these Marines were left to determine who would be evacuated from Afghanistan, and who would be left behind. Young men and women just out of their teens became visa officers, forced to make Solomonic decisions that would determine the path of life of thousands of men, women and children.

“War is young men dying and old men talking,” Franklin D. Roosevelt once said. The final act of the Afghanistan war was certainly that — negotiated by old men in Doha, Qatar, under the direction of two septuagenarian American presidents.

But it was [the young](#) who faced the fallout in what would become the [largest noncombatant evacuation](#) ever conducted by the U.S. military. Of the 13 American service members — 11 of them Marines — killed in the suicide bombing on Aug. 26, five were 20 years old, and seven more were in their early 20s. One was 31. Their platoonmates, young men and women themselves, are still sifting through the emotional repercussions of those extraordinary last 10 days.

### **Ghost Company**

Capt. Geoff Ball, call sign “Ghost Six,” joined the Marine Corps because, he says, “it didn’t feel right having other guys go out and fight, while I just sit at home and benefit from their sacrifice without doing anything myself.” After growing up in Littleton, Colo., he got a B.A. in international relations from George Washington University, and was commissioned in 2012. He said goodbye to his pregnant wife and deployed to Jordan with Ghost Company in April, his green seabag filled with 40 books, including Victor Hugo’s “Les Misérables.”

On the night of Aug. 12, Captain Ball, called “Six” by his Marines, was on a training exercise in Jordan when he received a text from his gunnery sergeant. “Look at the news right now,” it said. The Taliban had captured Kandahar and Herat, Afghanistan’s second- and third-largest cities. The U.S. military had withdrawn from Afghanistan, so President Biden ordered 3,000 troops to Kabul to evacuate Americans. Soon that number would be 5,800. Captain Ball returned to base to the news that Ghost Company of the “2/1,” as the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines is known, should be ready to deploy in 96 hours.

Ghost Company evolved from 2/1's Ghost Battalion, which earned its name, according to Marine Corps legend, through a history of rapid helicopter assaults in Vietnam that left frustrated North Vietnamese commanders in their wake. Senior commanders often gave the toughest missions to the Ghosts of 2/1.

On Aug. 18, 110 Marines of Ghost Company landed at Hamid Karzai International Airport on a tarmac that had been cleared after a tragic melee two days earlier, when people surged onto an American warplane's wings and fell from the sky after it took off. The Marines had seen the news reports and half-expected to see refugees running to their plane when it landed.

The tarmac in the middle of the night was "intense, but controlled," Captain Ball recalled in an interview with The New York Times at Camp Pendleton, Calif., where Ghost Company and 2/1 are based. There was rifle fire just outside the airport, and tracers and flares were going up. Troops from other NATO countries, evacuating their own civilians, occupied almost every part of the sprawling airport. When it came time to sleep, service members found space wherever they could, including in one case on a treadmill.

This was the first time in Afghanistan for Captain Ball, and he would not see the country beyond the airport.

On Aug. 19, Ghost Company received orders to open Abbey Gate. The Marines hadn't brought any transportation to get around the airport complex, so they hot-wired a blue bus nearby. They called it Big Blue. They also took a motorized baggage cart and called it Casper, because, Ghost Company. Altogether, Ghost Company commandeered 10 vehicles to use at the airport.

Arriving at Abbey Gate around midday, the Marines saw thousands of desperate people pressed together. Many had been there for days, under the stern watch of Taliban fighters standing on cars, rifles in their arms. People were yelling and holding up whatever documentation they thought would help get them through: yellowed letters of appreciation from an Army colonel in Kandahar, completion certificates for courses taken with American troops.

But before the Marines could start looking at any of this documentation, they had to impose some kind of order. That meant working with British forces and other troops to clear a path from Abbey Gate all the way to the Baron Hotel, where the Afghans were backed up. And that meant pushing through the crowd, which sparked a panic that led to a stampede.

Marines got swept up in the crowd, and it started to look like there was going to be another surge onto the airport runway. Captain Ball turned to First Lt. Sam Farmer and yelled, "Get your platoon, get them into the crowd and push them back!"

The 41 Marines of Ghost Company's 1st Platoon tried to provide a barrier. For the next 45 minutes, the Marines were in a shoving match with the crowd. The people in front were being pushed by the Marines, but they were also being pushed by people behind them.

"You are smashed in there so badly that your arms are stuck above your head," Captain Ball said. Cpl. Xavier Cardona and Lance Cpl. Jordan Houston saw one of their platoonmates fall; he was quickly engulfed, then trampled. The two young men pushed forward, picked up their fellow Marine and dragged him back to Abbey Gate.

Captain Ball pulled back and looked out over the scene. "It was layers — civilians, then Marines, then another layer of civilians, then Marines," he said. "And we're just pushing each other; it's like we don't know what to do."

Captain Ball started wading back into the crowd, and Cpl. Wyatt Wilson, 23, pulled him back. "No you don't, Six," he said, before moving into the crowd himself. Captain Ball climbed atop a vehicle to see. There was no pressure release for the crowd, he realized. To impose order, the Marines needed to let some people into Abbey Gate.

Once the British troops and the Marines let in around 300 Afghans, corralling them to one side, there was a little space to maneuver. But thousands of people remained, pushing and crying, while the Marines tried to hold their lines. By 5 p.m., as the sun was starting to dip, it became clear that there still was no pathway to the gate that wasn't thronged with people.

Gunnery Sgt. Brett Tate, a Marine with 2/1's Fox Company, came up with a plan: just talk to the Afghans. Captain Ball sent the order down the ranks, then asked an interpreter to relay the message to the Afghans. But the interpreter told him that "you have to talk. They have to hear you."

"Ladies and gentlemen, I need you to move backwards," Captain Ball yelled. "Then we can start processing you tomorrow." But people had been guarding their precious spots at the gate for days. A few of them shifted. Captain Ball kept talking. A few more moved. As Captain Ball walked into the crowd, still talking, Corporal Lopez put his hand on his flak jacket. "Grab the Six," he said. Soon two other Marines were holding onto Captain Ball as well.

"I was pretty nervous to be walking into that crowd," Captain Ball said. "But once they grabbed me, the fear left." Slowly, the Marines walked the crowd backward.

For 12 more hours, the Marines worked to clear the path. Late into the night, a British major told Captain Ball that they had to tell the Taliban what they were doing. Before he knew it, Captain Ball was walking to a dark alley behind the Baron Hotel to meet Taliban fighters. "I realize I need to look confident," he said. He tried his best and let the British major do the talking. Soon, the Taliban fighters were moving cars out of the way to help the Marines and the British. They worked through the night.

At dawn on Aug. 20, Abbey Gate opened. It had been the most intense 20 hours most of the Ghost Company Marines had ever experienced. And it was only the first day.

### **The Lost and the Missing**

The Marines were under orders: Anyone in the crowd with one of four golden tickets — American passport, green card, special immigrant visa, yellow badge from the American Embassy — or who fit some special nebulous exception that the Biden administration was calling "vulnerable Afghans" could be allowed into the airport. But those criteria didn't cover most of the people clamoring to get in, and there were so many people that the Marines often couldn't find the ones who had golden tickets anyway. On top of that, the Marines were inundated with phone calls and text messages from senators in Washington, D.C.; Afghan War veterans in California; news organizations; and nonprofit groups, all trying to get vulnerable Afghans through the gate.

Captain Rodriguez had arrived from Kuwait two days earlier than Captain Ball, with his own 2/1 company. They had thrown their sleeping bags in a room next to the chow hall used by Turkish troops.

Second-generation Cuban American on his dad's side and second-generation Mexican American on his mom's side, Captain Rodriguez followed his father, who had been a Navy reservist, into the military. He got his B.S. in human resources management at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and then ended up at Marine Corps basic school in Quantico at the same time as Captain Ball, in 2013. This was his first time in Afghanistan as well. And, like Captain Ball, he had left a pregnant wife at home.

In Kabul, Captain Rodriguez found himself on a mission to rescue 32 Afghan female athletes. Jeff Phaneuf, a former Marine in Princeton, N.J., working with an American organization that was trying to evacuate the athletes, had gotten the captain's cellphone number.

The athletes were in separate groups en route to the airport or already at Abbey Gate. Captain Rodriguez pushed into the crowd to find them.

It was like a game of telephone with higher stakes. “It was as simple as, ‘What are they wearing?’” he recalled of his texts with Mr. Phaneuf. “Then he would relate to me, ‘They’re 200 meters from the canal. They’re wearing this,’ and then, ‘They’re in the canal, they’re wearing that.’ ” And thus, over the course of four hours, Captain Rodriguez found the athletes.

Nearby, other Marines were doing the same thing.

Back in Virginia, Lt. Col. Justin Bellman had been trying to get his former interpreter, Walid, through Abbey Gate for 60 hours. During one melee, Walid’s son had fallen and lost a shoe. Finally, an unfamiliar number showed up on Colonel Bellman’s cellphone while he stood at a bus stop. The caller identified himself as a Marine.

“Did you give a sign with your phone number on it to an Afghan at Abbey Gate?” the voice asked. “Can you vouch for him?”

His voice shaking, Colonel Bellman said yes.

“I’ve got eyes on him,” the Marine said. “We’re gonna pull him in.”

Forty-five minutes later, Colonel Bellman’s phone rang again. This time, it was Walid. “My son,” he said, “will be coming to America with one shoe.”

Captain Rodriguez, meanwhile, was on a new mission, to find a country willing to take a brother and sister, ages 8 and 10. They had arrived at Abbey Gate by themselves and ended up in the sewage canal. A Marine pulled them out and called Captain Rodriguez. She showed him the children tucked into a corner outside the gate, under some netting. The girl looked stoic, her arm around her little brother, who looked numb, Captain Rodriguez recalled. Through an interpreter, the girl said their parents had been killed.

Captain Rodriguez was not about to send the two back to the sewage canal. He thought about his wife’s pregnancy — she was in her 8th month — as he searched for someone to take the children. He went first to State Department officials. They said the United States was not taking in unaccompanied children. The Norwegians said they were full. The Italians said no.

It was the next day now, and the siblings had been in Marine Corps custody for more than 12 hours. They ate a couple of MREs and slept on the concrete under blankets.

Deliverance came around noon. “Can you take two children?” Capt. Rodriguez asked the Finnish ambassador, who gave a thumbs-up. Captain Rodriguez, his eyes watering, hugged the two children and watched them disappear with the Finns.

### **Deadline Draws Near**

Corporal Lopez had joined the Marine Corps just three months after he graduated from La Quinta High School in Westminster, Calif., in 2017. Both of his parents worked for the Riverside County sheriff’s office, and once he got through basic training, he joined an elite Marine antiterrorism team before ending up in Ghost Company. At the Kabul airport, Corporal Lopez was all over the place, especially when children were involved.

At one point, he made it his mission to get an orphaned boy to safety. But the airport orphanage that was being run by the Norwegians was two and a half miles away, and Corporal Lopez couldn’t find a vehicle. So he put the boy on his shoulders and walked.

The boy didn’t have shoes when they started out. By the time the two arrived, Corporal Lopez had found him a pair.



But for every success, there were 10 failures, people who didn't make the State Department criteria and were sent back out. And most of the people who were rejected were sent back out through Abbey Gate, where it was often left to Ghost Company to deliver the bad news.

"It is very hard to look at a family that doesn't have the proper documentation, and then put them back into a sewage canal," Captain Ball said. "You're looking at someone who believes that if they don't get out through this airport that they will be killed by the Taliban."

At first, Captain Ball tried to spend time with the rejected families. "Listen, let me give you some very hard news right now," he told one group. "I'm going to have to kick you out. There's nothing you can tell me right now that's going to change this situation. So I'm going to let you sit here for the next 15 minutes, and you need to start figuring out your plan for what you're going to do next in life."

But as the Aug. 31 withdrawal deadline drew nearer, Captain Ball realized he didn't have time to talk to each person who was turned away.

"I saw everything from calm acceptance to hysteria," he said. One woman, in particular, is still on his mind: She was miming, for him, the Taliban cutting off her nose and her ears. And there was nothing he could do.

Ghost Company had half a day off on Aug. 22, and Captain Ball slept for 13 hours straight. That was followed by some light work at the passenger terminal, where they were given a break from the Abbey Gate heartache and got to see little children getting on planes with their families. The next day, it was back to Abbey Gate for the final push. It had been quietly decided that the gate would close on Aug. 26.

The Afghans knew they were up against a deadline, though they didn't know the date. "The closer we get to the 31st, the more agitated the crowd is," Captain Ball said.

All day on Aug. 26, he was walking along the jersey barrier. Ghost Company's entire 1st platoon was out there, standing next to the canal or backed up against the wall or fetching people from the crowd. Hundreds of people, all day, were getting crushed against the jersey barrier. But they kept coming. All day, they kept coming.

As he spoke of the moments leading up to 5:48 p.m. when the bomb went off, Captain Ball started using present and future tenses, as if to create some emotional distance for himself. "The suicide bomber will set up along the canal, directly across from us," Captain Ball said. "He's got a bomb that produces fragmentation ball bearings; it's directional in the sense that he's able to spray directly into my Marines."

He never saw the bomber. Around 75 feet away, he just saw the flash and heard the boom. He probably passed out, because the next thing he remembered is yelling, "Get security! Get security!" He couldn't focus, and then a CS gas canister carried by a downed Marine was punctured by shrapnel and exploded, and he couldn't breathe. Some of Captain Ball's Marines dragged him back to Abbey Gate, and he cleared the tear gas from his lungs and eyes and ran back to help.

The scene was hellish. He heard gunfire, and saw Marines dragging their wounded. In recalling what happened, Captain Ball seemed to be insisting that people understand what his Marines did. "Corporal Wyatt Wilson, one of the most severely wounded Marines, is going to take shrapnel from his ankle, all the way up the side of his body through his jaw," he said, then pauses to gather himself. "He's going to get thrown by the blast, and he is going to land near another wounded Marine, in the CS gas, with injuries that are so severe, he is pulse-less when he gets to the airport's trauma facility later."

"In 30 minutes he is going to have his chest cut open, his heart massaged and tied off" by a military doctor, Captain Ball continued, with effort. But before all that, Corporal Wilson tried to make sure others got help. He dragged the wounded Marine, 19-year-old Corporal Kelsee Lainhart, to the fence, 65 feet away. "He is going to wave help away, deny treatment himself, and be like, take this Marine,

and then he's going to crawl his way to the casualty collection point all the way back, so others can go save others."

Nine of Captain Ball's Ghost Company troops were killed, including Corporal Lopez, who had snatched the little girl from the sewage canal just before the bombing; and Petty Officer Soviak, the Navy corpsman who was treating someone who had fainted near the gate. Corporal Wilson and 13 more injured were flown out for treatment. All of the Ghost Company Marines killed and wounded came from 1st Platoon, the ones who, on that first day, fought so hard to open Abbey Gate.

After the bombing, the surviving members of Ghost Company tried to get through each day. They found jobs for themselves in the passenger terminal at the airport — anything to stay occupied. They flew out of Kabul on Aug. 28, short 23 people. At a company memorial on Sept. 8, Captain Ball spoke.

"The whole world was watching," the Marine captain told his troops. "But the Marines at Abbey Gate, we pulled in 33,000 people, more than any other gate. We stayed open when other gates closed. We should take pride in that."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Afghan military pilots: abandoned by US</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/asia/afghan-pilots-taliban-us.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/world/asia/afghan-pilots-taliban-us.html</a>
GIST	<p>As Kabul was falling to the Taliban in August, the young Afghan Air Force pilot flew his PC-12 turboprop from Afghanistan to neighboring Tajikistan to escape. Like other Afghan officers who fled in dozens of military aircraft to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the pilot had faith that his American military partners would rescue him.</p> <p>"We believed in the U.S. military and government — that they would help us and get us out of this situation," said the pilot, a lieutenant, who, like other pilots in this article, spoke on the condition of anonymity because of security concerns.</p> <p>The lieutenant is among 143 Afghan pilots and crew members now detained by the Tajik authorities. They are English speakers trained by the U.S. Air Force, and they are counting on the American government or military to evacuate them, and also to help evacuate their families back home in Afghanistan.</p> <p>Several thousand other Afghan Air Force pilots and crew members are in hiding in Afghanistan, feeling abandoned by the U.S. military, their longtime combat ally. They say they and their families are at risk of being hunted down and killed by the Taliban.</p> <p>"I stood shoulder to shoulder with my American allies for five years — but now they have forgotten us," an Afghan Air Force captain who piloted C-208 airplanes said by phone from a safe house in Kabul.</p> <p>Several other pilots who spoke by phone from Afghanistan said they had heard nothing from the U.S. government. But they said they were being assisted by their former military advisers, many of them volunteers in a group called <a href="#">Operation Sacred Promise</a>, formed to help get Afghan Air Force personnel to safety.</p> <p>Brig. Gen. David Hicks, a retired Air Force officer who is chief executive of Operation Sacred Promise, said the group, formed in August, had received desperate messages from stranded pilots asking whether the U.S. government had a plan to get them to safety.</p> <p>"We found out that there was no plan by the U.S. to do anything to get these folks out," said General Hicks, who once commanded the U.S.-led air force training mission in Afghanistan.</p> <p>He said: "The U.S. has spent millions and millions on these highly educated and highly motivated individuals. Based on what they did fighting the Taliban, we think they deserve priority."</p>

A State Department spokesperson offered no timeline on relocating Afghan pilots but said Sunday, “We are in regular communication with the government of Tajikistan, and part of those communications includes coordination in response to Afghan Air Force pilots.”

The spokesperson said, “The United States verified the identities of approximately 150 Afghans after gaining access to the last group in mid-October.”

The United States spent \$89 billion training and equipping Afghan defense and security forces, including the Afghan Air Force and its elite Special Mission Wing. Many of the pilots were trained in the United States.

Some pilots and crew members and their families were evacuated with the help of the U.S. government and military just after the Taliban takeover. But many more were unable to get out, despite attempts by their former advisers to help them.

Since mid-August, General Hicks said, Operation Sacred Promise has helped evacuate about 350 Afghans. The group has vetted about 2,000 Afghan Air Force personnel and their relatives trying to leave the country, with about 8,000 more still to be vetted, he said.

Lt. Col. Safia Ferozi, an Afghan Air Force squadron commander who was evacuated to the United States with her husband — also a pilot — and daughter, said she had been inundated with panicked calls and texts from Afghan pilots in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

“They fought side by side with the Americans,” Colonel Ferozi said in a telephone interview. “Now they feel forgotten. Why doesn’t the U.S. care about these people who fought beside them?”

In September, a group of Afghan pilots and crew members was evacuated from Uzbekistan with the help of the U.S. government and Operation Sacred Promise after being detained by the Uzbek authorities.

But another group of 143 Afghan Air Force personnel remains in detention at a sanitarium near the Tajik capital, Dushanbe. They said they were growing increasingly desperate, even though U.S. Embassy officials in Dushanbe had recently arrived to record their biometric data as part of an effort to evacuate them.

“The morale among our colleagues here is very low,” said an Afghan Air Force major who flew a C-208 military plane to Tajikistan. “We are in an unknown situation and we don’t know what will happen next to us.”

The major and several other pilots spoke on WhatsApp audio messages recorded on smuggled cellphones hidden from guards. They said they were not allowed to leave the facility, where most cellphones had been confiscated. They survive on meager food rations and receive only basic medical care, they said.

Many have not been in touch with their families in Afghanistan, some of whom don’t know whether they are still alive, they said.

“We feel abandoned, but we still have hope the U.S. will help us,” said a major who said he had piloted numerous combat missions.

The Tajikistan Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to email messages requesting comment.

Among those held in Tajikistan is an Afghan pilot who is pregnant and said she needed prenatal care. Her husband, also a pilot, was being held with her.

“We are living like prisoners,” she said in an audio message recorded late last month. “We are fed up. We are getting weak. I’d like to request that the U.S. government expedite our situation here.”

During Afghanistan's collapse about 25 percent of the Afghan Air Force's aircraft were flown to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, according to an Oct. 31 report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. General Hicks put the number at 56 to 60 aircraft. (U.S. forces rendered unusable 80 others at the Kabul Airport in late August.)

The status of the planes is uncertain. When asked in mid-August what was being done to recover the aircraft, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III replied, "We're focused on the airfield and getting people out safely."

Speaking from Afghanistan, several Afghan Air Force pilots described moving from house to house to avoid capture by the Taliban. They said they were running out of money and did not dare look for work because they feared being discovered by Taliban officials.

An Afghan Air Force major who flew C-208 planes for eight years said the Taliban had confronted his relatives, demanding to know his whereabouts. Taliban fighters searched his home and interrogated his mother, said the major, who had moved with his wife and four children to a series of safe houses.

"It's very dangerous for us here," the major said.

He said he had been unable to reach anyone in the U.S. government or military, other than his former U.S. Air Force adviser. "It seems we aren't so important to them anymore," he said.

The Taliban have said there is a general amnesty for any Afghan who served in the former government or worked with the U.S. government or military. But several Afghan Air Force pilots have been killed by the Taliban this year.

"They have no good options," General Hicks said. "They're at risk of being hunted down and killed."

A major who piloted C-208 planes and was trained at a U.S. Air Force base in Texas said he turned down a chance to fly to Tajikistan in August because he didn't want to leave his family behind. Now he and his wife and their seven children are in hiding, low on money and food.

"Our life gets worse day by day," the major said. "We can't stay in one place. We are always hiding — even our relatives don't know where we are."

General Hicks said he feared the pilots and crew members in Afghanistan would soon run out of money and food, and possibly lose what freedom they have left.

"There's no place for them to hide inside Afghanistan," he said. "We have to realize that it's about to be a very dark winter for these people."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Pakistan lifts ban radical Islamist party</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pakistan-lifts-ban-radical-party-anti-france-rally-81029588">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pakistan-lifts-ban-radical-party-anti-france-rally-81029588</a>
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD -- Pakistan said Monday it has lifted a ban on a radical Islamist party behind a violent anti-France protest last month that triggered clashes with police, leaving six officers and four demonstrators dead.</p> <p>The development follows an agreement reached last week between the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan that the party would halt its march to Islamabad. The march was called to demand the closure of the French Embassy in the Pakistani capital.</p> <p>The interior ministry lifted the ban late Sunday.</p>

TLP was outlawed a year ago amid violent rallies over the publications of caricatures of Islam's prophet in France. The party started demanding the expulsion of French envoy in October 2020, when French President Emmanuel Macron tried to defend caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad as freedom of expression.

Macron's comments came after a young Muslim beheaded a French school teacher who had shown caricatures of the prophet in class. The images were republished by the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo to mark the opening of the trial over the deadly 2015 attack against the publication for the original caricatures.

That enraged many Muslims who believe those depictions were blasphemous.

Pakistan's move to lift the ban on TLP drew criticism on social media. The government said the ban was lifted in the "larger national interest" amid assurances the party would not indulge in violent activities in future.

The protest march on Islamabad, which started Oct. 22, was also meant to demand the release of the party's leader, Saad Rizvi, who was arrested a year ago, as well as thousands of Islamists who were detained in a crackdown to foil Islamists' march from the city of Lahore to Islamabad.

TLP supporters are yet to formally announce the end of their march and scores of demonstrators are still sitting along a highway in the city of Wazirabad. Authorities say they last week freed more than 1,000 detained TLP supporters and that a process was underway to release Rizvi.

Rizvi's party gained prominence in Pakistan's 2018 elections, campaigning on the single issue of defending the country's blasphemy law, which calls for the death penalty for anyone who insults Islam.

Pakistan's military was to brief lawmakers later Monday on the current security situation in the country.

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HEADLINE	11/06 FBI: 2,700 probes into domestic extremism
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/6/biden-crusade-against-domestic-extremism-spurs-tho/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/6/biden-crusade-against-domestic-extremism-spurs-tho/</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI currently has 2,700 open investigations of domestic extremism, more than double the usual number of cases, according to counterterrorism officials, underscoring the Biden administration's accelerated pursuit of what it calls "domestic violent extremists."</p> <p>The increase in domestic violent extremism described by the Biden administration is shocking, suggesting that the number of plots and racially-motivated killings attributed to white supremacists has also multiplied. So far, the administration has not presented those sorts of numbers.</p> <p>The Department of Homeland Security recorded an average of 1,000 investigations into domestic terrorism plots and incidents per year from 2017 through 2019, including approximately 846 arrests of suspected domestic terrorists by the FBI and other agencies, according to a DHS report.</p> <p>The agencies attributed 57 deaths from 2017 through 2019 to acts of domestic terrorism, of which 47 were racially motivated and primarily carried out by white supremacists, according to the report.</p> <p>"It goes without saying that the threat from domestic terrorism is heightened and has significantly increased in the last 18 months," FBI Counterterrorism Division Assistant Director Timothy Langan said in recent testimony before Congress.</p> <p>In the wake of the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, the Biden administration redoubled efforts to counter the threat of "racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists" which the DHS describes as a "national threat priority."</p>

There are also growing concerns, however, that the hunt for domestic extremists has become politically charged and that a once-unthinkable authoritarian trampling of civil liberties in the U.S. is becoming a reality.

“Our concern is that the FBI, being a preeminent counterterrorism agency, along with the CIA [and NSA], that those assets could be turned inward to target U.S. citizens without a foreign nexus,” said Rep. Rick Crawford of Arkansas, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee’s counterterrorism and counterintelligence panel, said in an interview.

“You have people that are ramping up the rhetoric on domestic violent extremism ... to sort of make the case for and essentially justify the misuse, potentially, of intelligence assets that are specifically authorized for foreign threats.”

Fears of a burgeoning police state were piqued last month when Attorney General Merrick B. Garland issued a memorandum directing federal law enforcement officials to discuss strategies “for addressing threats against” local school boards and administrators, and to “open dedicated lines of communication for threat reporting, assessment and response.”

The memo was in response to a National School Boards Association (NSBA) letter to President Biden requesting “federal assistance to stop threats” from parents against public school officials.

Mr. Garland’s memo received swift backlash. Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee told Mr. Garland in a letter that they were concerned about “policing the speech of citizens and concerned parents.”

“It’s exactly this kind of intimidation of private citizens by government officials that our federal civil rights laws were designed to prevent,” Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Kentucky Republican, wrote in a separate letter to Mr. Garland.

The NSBA has since apologized, saying there was “no justification for some of the language included in the letter.”

But Mr. Garland stood by his memo. He said the NSBA’s apology “does not change the association’s concern of violence or threats of violence.”

For Mr. Crawford, the episode is a clear warning sign that the domestic-terrorism narrative has gotten out of hand.

“We’re playing fast and loose with the definition of what constitutes a domestic terrorist and that’s the danger of going down this road without the appropriate safeguards,” he said.

#### Driving a Narrative

Over the summer, the Biden administration announced a sweeping strategy for confronting a rising domestic terrorism threat they say largely “emerges from racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists and networks whose racial, ethnic, or religious hatred leads them towards violence.”

The Biden strategy document warns that domestic terrorists take on a variety of forms, including lone actors and “informally aligned individuals.”

“These actors have different motivations, but many focus their violence towards the same segment or segments of the American community, whether persons of color, immigrants, Jews, Muslims, other religious minorities, women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, or others,” it said.

The document also stressed that the definition of “domestic terrorism in our law makes no distinction based on political views.”

Former Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf was quick to raise red flags about the new focus on domestic terrorism. He said the number of domestic terrorism attacks, while concerning, does not rise to the level of a national priority on par with foreign terrorist organizations, cyber security breaches or pandemics.

The Biden administration also prioritized right-wing extremists and Jan. 6 rioters, which Democrats have labeled “insurrectionists,” while overlooking left-wing extremists such as Antifa that were responsible for months of rioting and unrest across the U.S.

“The administration’s new strategy on dealing with domestic terrorism only makes the bias more apparent,” Mr. Wolf wrote in a June essay for The Heritage Foundation. “On the one hand, the document is a public safety policy ‘nothing burger.’ There really isn’t anything new or different. On the other hand, it is a messaging document designed to tar progressive opponents as dangerous and unstable.”

Still, the focus on domestic terrorism and the perhaps more nebulous scourge of “domestic extremism” has become a priority focus across federal agencies.

Few agencies have attended to the threat of “domestic extremism” with more vigor than the Department of Defense. After several active duty service members were identified in the pro-Trump mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, rooting out extremism became a focal point for Pentagon top brass.

“The job of the Department of Defense is to keep America safe from our enemies, but we can’t do that if some of those enemies lie with our own ranks,” Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said during his confirmation hearing that took place just weeks after Jan. 6 riot.

In the spring, Mr. Austin ordered a 60-day “stand down” across DOD to discuss the scourge of extremism. He established a working group to address further steps needed to defeat its enemy within and, notably, to update the Pentagon’s definition of extremist conduct.

Some lawmakers are suspect of the Pentagon’s focus on right-wing extremism.

Last month, 12 Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee penned a letter to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley with concerns over “this administration’s imposition of political narratives on our military.”

The Pentagon’s Countering Extremism Working Group was among several concerns outlined in the lawmakers’ letter, which The Washington Times recently obtained.

“A global ‘stand-down’ curtailed essential military operations so that troops could discuss the perils of ‘right-wing’ extremism,” they wrote. “Six months into its existence, a bloated “Countering Extremism Working Group” plods through its endless review of DOD’s longstanding definition of extremist conduct.”

“All this is taking place despite clear data that pegs the number of extremists in our military as minuscule.”

Still, Democrats in Congress warn that active-duty troops and veterans are uniquely susceptible to being recruited by far-right and white supremacist extremist groups.

“The corrupting influence of domestic violent extremist groups that recruit veterans is a critical issue at a time where our nation remains deeply divided,” House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Mark Takano, California Democrat, said recently at the launch of a series of hearings on the topic.

Republicans on the panel said the Democrats were perpetuating false narratives and painting veterans in a bad light.



The committee's top Republican, Rep. Mike Bost of Illinois, said "headline-grabbing" anecdotes about veterans in extremist groups don't prove a trend.

"There is very little data on how many veterans are actually involved in violent extremism and the actions that follow," he said. "And there is no question that the vast majority of veterans are law-abiding and peaceful. We cannot let a few bad apples spoil the whole bunch."

Rep. Jim Banks, Indiana Republican, said at the hearing that the premise was "offensive."

"The fact that you're going to save our veterans from becoming political terrorists is offensive to every veteran in America," he said.

Lora Reis, a senior homeland security research fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, warned that Democrats were using a false narrative to target Republicans.

"This is what the left is focusing on and running with and continuing this narrative of domestic violence and white supremacists, specifically being the most persistent and lethal threat in the homeland," she said in an interview. "They completely ignore what actually happened in 2020 they don't mention Antifa or [Black Lives Matter]. And so this is completely biased, and it's being used to go after conservatives and in the hearing instance of this hearing to go after veterans and silenced them from free speech."

Thin Ice

Similar hearings on domestic terrorism have dotted lawmakers' calendars in recent months.

Retired FBI Special Agent Kenneth Gray, who spent the majority of his career in both domestic and international counterterrorism, said the rise in domestic terrorism as reported by the FBI and DHS is, in fact, concerning. But countering the threat only becomes more complicated when the conversation surrounding domestic terrorism becomes politicized.

"I think both are occurring at the same time," said Mr. Gray, who now serves as a senior lecturer at the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences at the University of New Haven.

"There is a rise in racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, and there is a rise in the anti-government violent extremism," he said. "But it is also being used as a cudgel on both left and right on the political side."

He fears the increasing threat of domestic terrorism combined with increased polarization could lead the U.S. on a path toward more intrusive methods for infiltrating and rooting out groups and individuals deemed to be domestic terrorists or extremists.

Mr. Crawford said he sat with a similar fear Wednesday as Democrats called an open hearing on domestic terrorism before a House Intelligence subcommittee.

In his opening remarks, House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff reiterated the threat of white supremacists that is at the heart of the administration's strategy.

"We must also acknowledge the persistent role White supremacy and White nationalism have on the frequency and severity of these threats," said Mr. Schiff, California Democrat. "It is an indisputable fact that a growing number proportion of domestic terrorist threats arise from people driven by hatred and a stated desire to harm people because of the color of their skin or their religious beliefs."

"We are seeing a sharpened edge to the threat, an increasingly persistent and coordinated effort to terrorize based on these repugnant views," he said.

Mr. Crawford said he is concerned by any uptick in domestic terrorism and supports the work that the FBI and DHS do to combat the threat. But he is concerned about Mr. Schiff's direction for the committee, which oversees national intelligence program funds meant for countering foreign threats.

After the hearing, he said that it was clear to him that the intent of the open hearing, rather than a closed hearing where the committee could ask more pointed questions, was to put on a show for the media and "make a political statement."

No member of the Intelligence Committee advocated for the use of foreign intelligence capabilities to target domestic terrorism. All committee members on witnesses at the hearing cited the importance of protecting civil liberties.

In the current, politically charged environment, however, Mr. Crawford increasingly worries that those guardrails will be removed in the name of combating domestic violent extremists.

"We're kind of treading on thin ice here with regard to just sort of cavalierly throwing this term around," he said. "I think we've gone a step too far — well beyond a step too far. I think this is dangerous."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Military jury disgusted by CIA torture</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/politics/military-jury-cia-torture.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/politics/military-jury-cia-torture.html</a>
GIST	<p>GUANTÁNAMO BAY, Cuba — A Navy captain who as head of a jury in a war-crimes court wrote a damning letter calling the C.I.A.'s torture of a terrorist "a stain on the moral fiber of America" said his views are typical of senior members of the U.S. military.</p> <p>Capt. Scott B. Curtis, the jury foreman, said it is just that he had the opportunity to express his thoughts in a letter proposing clemency for the prisoner <a href="#">Majid Khan</a>, a Qaeda recruit who pleaded guilty to terrorism and murder charges for delivering \$50,000 from his native Pakistan to finance a deadly bombing in Indonesia.</p> <p>But before he started writing, the eight-officer jury sentenced Mr. Khan to 26 years in prison.</p> <p>"There was no sympathy for him or what he had done," said Captain Curtis, who agreed to reveal his identity in an hourlong interview last week. "The crime itself, everyone thought that was an evil act and he should be accountable for that. It was the torture that was a mitigating factor."</p> <p>On the eve of his sentencing on Oct. 29, Mr. Khan, 41, offered a graphic account of his physical, sexual and psychological abuse by <a href="#">C.I.A. agents and operatives inflicted on him</a> in dungeonlike conditions in black-site prisons in Pakistan, Afghanistan and a third country. He described how he went from graduating from a suburban Baltimore high school in 1999 to becoming a courier and would-be suicide bomber for Al Qaeda to, since 2012, a repentant cooperator with the U.S. government.</p> <p>The two-hour presentation was so vivid it "kind of riveted us," Captain Curtis said.</p> <p>Mr. Khan pulled up a shirtsleeve to show the panel scars from shackles on his wrists. He offered to lift his pant leg to show similar scars on his ankle from the times he was hung in chains from a bar in a darkened cell for so long that his limbs swelled and the shackles cut his skin.</p> <p>It took the panel just 90 minutes to reach a decision. Not everybody agreed to the lowest end of a possible 25- to 40-year sentence, so they settled on 26 years.</p> <p>Then, Captain Curtis said, while the other officers chatted among themselves, he spent about 20 minutes writing <a href="#">the two-page, handwritten letter on red-ruled notebook paper</a> — no crumpled up false starts, no rough drafts.</p>

“Honestly, I sat down and wrote the letter myself and then read it to the rest of the panel,” he said. “I threw it on the table and said, ‘Anyone wants to sign this is welcome to do this, you’re under no obligation at all.’ Surprisingly, seven of eight, myself included, signed it.”

The clemency letter [provided a harsh critique of the legal framework and C.I.A. detention system](#) that the Bush administration established after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the legacy of which continues today in the form of the wartime prison at Guantánamo Bay now holding [Mr. Khan and 38 other detainees](#). It also offered an unusually candid view of the thinking of some U.S. military officers on the use and value of torture.

Those who signed it included a Marine lieutenant colonel, two Army lieutenant colonels, two Navy commanders and a Marine major. Their areas of specialty include aviation, submarines, communications, cybersecurity and administration.

“We were all pretty much of the same mind,” he said. “I just articulated it on paper.”

Captain Curtis, 51, an engineer whose specialty is aircraft carrier nuclear power systems, said by telephone from his current duty assignment in Tampa, Fla., that he understood that the letter’s sentiment might stir controversy but rejected the notion that this was a liberal position. In the military he has served for 30 years, he said, there is widespread agreement that “torture is wrong.”

“I think you’ll find that your senior people fully understand that acts like torture do more long-term damage than good, if they do any good,” he said, noting that Senator John McCain was no liberal and decried torture.

He anticipated no adverse impact on his career for identifying himself as the author of a letter condemning what he saw as a culture of abuse. Captain Curtis will retire from service this time next year and is likely in his last assignment, at the U.S. Central Command, the Pentagon division that oversees operations in the Middle East and South Asia.

“I think the United States is still the good guys, for lack of a better term, throughout the world,” he said. “We certainly make mistakes and I wasn’t condemning the present military and the present C.I.A.”

Last week, the jury foreman said, was his closest encounter with a terrorist. They sat about 15 feet apart inside the courtroom at Guantánamo Bay, with the prisoner’s father and youngest sister watching at the back of the court.

Mr. Khan’s description of his torture were reminiscent of portrayals in the movie “Zero Dark Thirty” and “snippets of things” Captain Curtis had heard about torture. “What surprised me was that I had someone in front of me that it happened to,” he said.

Captain Curtis has had experience in irregular warfare. In 2010, while he commanded the U.S.S. Ashland, Somali pirates mistook his amphibious dock landing ship for a cargo ship and attacked it in the Gulf of Aden. “We blew them out of the water,” he said. At least five were captured and brought to the United States for trial. One got a 33-year sentence for cooperating with the government. The rest are serving life in federal prison.

In the case of Mr. Khan, his 26-year sentence was largely symbolic. When he pleaded guilty in 2012, he became a government cooperator and the parties agreed to delay sentencing so that Mr. Khan could demonstrate that cooperation as part of a deal that would, in exchange, reduce his eventual jury sentence.

But the jury was not told about the deal.

Captain Curtis said he had taught R.O.T.C. units in recent years and was keenly aware of “what 21-year-olds are capable of.” Mr. Khan, while in his 20s, “did some terrible things,” among them delivering \$50,000 that was used to finance the 2003 bombing of a Marriott hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, that killed 11 people. “The 41-year-old man in front of us truly regretted what he had done.”

The captain said his letter intentionally “didn’t accuse anybody of illegal acts” and that he was familiar with what was authorized under Enhanced Interrogation. “But slamming his head against the wall every time they moved him and beating him while he was hooded, I don’t think those are legal acts. I think that falls into the category of torture.”

The letter asking a senior Pentagon official to grant mercy, or clemency, to Mr. Khan was not read aloud in court. The foreman gave it to the bailiff, a soldier in battle dress, who delivered it to Maj. Michael J. Lyness, Mr. Khan’s military defense attorney.

The panel then left the courtroom and, while riding a ferry across Guantánamo Bay to quarters where they were sequestered, discovered in an internet search that Mr. Khan, even before sentencing, had a deal that could release him as soon as February, or as late as February 2025.

Some of the panel members “were a little bit offended” that their sentence was essentially “meaningless,” he said. They found it “a little frustrating given the thought we put into it.”

But Captain Curtis said he understood that the knowledge would have “tainted our process” of arriving at the right sentence, and that some members would have concluded “it doesn’t matter what we do — just pick a number.”

It is not known where Mr. Khan, a citizen of Pakistan, will go after Guantánamo, or when he might leave. In 2002, according to his plea, he wore a suicide vest in a failed effort to assassinate the president of Pakistan at the time, Pervez Musharraf, a U.S. ally in the war on terrorism. Then in 2012, according to his military lawyers, he “joined Team America” and became a cooperator in cases against other Qaeda members.

His lawyers argue that he could be in danger if he were repatriated. It will be up to American diplomats to find a safe place for him to resettle with his wife and daughter, who was born after his arrest in 2003.

“That’s going to be a tough one,” said Captain Curtis. “I’m assuming they have a witness protection program type thing and that they’ll end up in Norway or something like that.”

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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Iraq officials: drone strike targeted PM</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/middleeast/iraq-prime-minister-drone.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/world/middleeast/iraq-prime-minister-drone.html</a>
GIST	<p>A drone strike targeted Iraq’s prime minister at his Baghdad residence early Sunday, but he was unharmed, officials said.</p> <p>“I am fine, praise be to God, and among my people,” Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi wrote <a href="#">on Twitter</a> shortly after the attack. He later appeared in <a href="#">a video posted online</a>, in which he denounced the attack as “cowardly.”</p> <p>“The missiles of treachery will not discourage the believers, and not a hair will be shaken in the steadfastness and insistence of our heroic security forces to preserve the security of the people,” he wrote in the Twitter post.</p> <p>A government statement <a href="#">carried by official media</a> said that a “booby-trapped drone” had targeted Mr. al-Kadhimi at his residence in the fortified Green Zone of Baghdad. “He is in good health,” the statement read.</p> <p>The government did not identify any suspected attackers, and there was no immediate claim of responsibility.</p> <p>The drone strike followed clashes in Baghdad between security forces and supporters of pro-Iran militias, who claim to have been victims of electoral fraud in <a href="#">the parliamentary elections held last month</a>. The pro-</p>

	<p>Iran groups' allies lost seats in the vote, and the Shiite cleric <a href="#">Muqtada al-Sadr</a>'s bloc emerged as a big winner.</p> <p>A State Department spokesman, Ned Price, called the strike Sunday an "apparent act of terrorism" that was "<a href="#">directed at the heart of the Iraqi state</a>."</p>
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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	11/07 No sign of missing Seattle FD deputy chief
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/still-no-sign-missing-sfd-deputy-chief-eastern-washington/A7AQSN3ZLZBPRHYMB5WMXM3PR4/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/still-no-sign-missing-sfd-deputy-chief-eastern-washington/A7AQSN3ZLZBPRHYMB5WMXM3PR4/</a>
GIST	<p>The search for a missing Seattle deputy fire chief has ended for Sunday night with still no sign of him.</p> <p>It has now been five days since anyone has heard from Chief Jay Schreckengost.</p> <p>His family and search and rescue teams from at least 15 different agencies have been looking for him.</p> <p>After several long, strenuous days, the search for the missing deputy fire chief is straining resources and people. But everyone here says they believe it is just a matter of time until they find him. Their big worry is the weather, which is mostly fine now. But snow could come at any time.</p> <p>Night fell here in Kittitas County with no sign of missing Seattle Fire Deputy Chief Schreckengost.</p> <p>"Avid outdoors man, avid hunter," said battalion chief Erik Hotchkiss.</p> <p>He has worked with Jay Schreckengost for 25 of the 31 years the deputy chief has been with Seattle Fire Department. The frustration of not finding him after nearly a week is growing, even though he is missing in rugged, steep terrain.</p> <p>"Because if something had gone wrong, Jay's the kind of man who would have known what to do to help, take care of himself," said Hotchkiss. "Create a shelter. Whatever it is."</p> <p>Those who know and love Deputy Fire Chief Schreckengost said he would also have the equipment to survive even in cold, mountainous conditions.</p> <p>Schreckengost last texted his family last Tuesday. He told them he was leaving his rented cabin near SR 410 to scout for elk. His son was coming the next day and they were going to hunt together. But he did not check in that night. When his son arrived Wednesday with no sign of him, he called for help.</p> <p>"We were able to have air support from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, a Chinook helicopter," said Inspector Chris Whitsett, Kittitas County Sheriff's spokesman. "A helicopter from Chelan County came down and helped. We have drones from a couple of different counties that are searching. And all of those provide intelligence."</p> <p>The fruitless search so far is taking a toll even on a veteran like Inspector Whitsett. He still has hope of finding Schreckengost, alive.</p> <p>It has been emotional.</p> <p>"Yes, Ma'am," said Whitsett, "of course. Always. It's challenging and frightening. It's a frightening thing to be in this kind of tough wilderness for a long time."</p>

	The search each day begins before first light and ends as night falls. Rescuers have plans to search for Deputy Chief Schreckengost until Friday. Of course, everyone here hopes they will find him — alive — long before that.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Seattle Humane not living up to promises?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/times-watchdog/seattle-humane-not-living-up-to-promises-made-in-30-million-campaign-for-new-complex/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/times-watchdog/seattle-humane-not-living-up-to-promises-made-in-30-million-campaign-for-new-complex/</a>
GIST	<p>As Seattle Humane campaigned over the past decade to build a \$30 million facility, its leaders pledged to take in more at-risk animals and coordinate more adoptions.</p> <p>“Your gift doesn’t just fund a new building; it helps us to change the face of animal welfare forever,” a marketing flyer read. It promised to increase adoptions by 60% and grow the number of critters taken in from “high-kill shelters or no-shelter communities” by more than 40%.</p> <p>But the palatial shelter — the largest nonprofit animal shelter in the Puget Sound region — hasn’t lived up to those promises.</p> <p>In fact, not long after the 2017 opening of the three-story building in Bellevue, Seattle Humane was coordinating fewer adoptions than smaller nonprofit shelters, a Seattle Times analysis of tax documents and animal shelter data found.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, shelters across the state saw a drop in animal intakes and adoptions, according to data reported by roughly 60 shelters to the independent data service <a href="#">Shelter Animals Count</a>, an industry standard. But Seattle Humane’s decline stood out with a 64% drop in intakes, twice as steep a drop as other shelters across Washington.</p> <p>The Seattle Times spoke with more than 30 current and former staffers and volunteers who described a nonprofit plagued by chaotic policies and a toxic work environment, and shared internal documents illustrating their concerns. Many asked to remain anonymous for fear of damaging their careers in the animal shelter industry.</p> <p>“I loved that job. Free medical insurance. Eight weeks’ vacation. And even with that, I couldn’t stay,” said Deidre Mayer, a former dog care lead who quit in 2019 after four years at the shelter. “It was sickening to watch.”</p> <p>Tensions came to a head in the summer of 2019, when the shelter’s decision to euthanize a dog with scant notice to staff or volunteers became a catalyst for an internal revolt. The CEO at the time resigned 13 days after the dog’s death.</p> <p>Christopher Ross, who took over as CEO of the nonprofit in January, and board chair Leanne Webber attributed staff frustration to a lack of leadership at the time, adding that the tone at the top has since changed. “That’s not who we are anymore,” said Ross.</p> <p>But Seattle Humane, which still employs senior managers from its tumultuous period, keeps struggling to perform at the levels of other nonprofit animal shelters in the Puget Sound region, even as shelters were met with an increased demand for pandemic puppies.</p> <p>Seattle Humane is a fundraising powerhouse capable of raising more in donations — which provide 90% of the shelter’s operating budget — on a single night than some of its peers do in a year. Despite Seattle Humane’s financial advantage and its spacious shelter, its tally of animal intakes and adoptions was a fraction of those accomplished by smaller shelters in the region at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

The Humane Society of Tacoma & Pierce County, for example, which has far fewer resources than Seattle Humane, coordinated more than three times the adoptions during the first 10 months of the pandemic, records show.

Seattle Humane recently announced new plans for transforming its shelter in Bellevue into a “pet-centric community center” and focusing on other services. It already offers more support for pets and owners, including a veterinary clinic and a pet food bank, than other shelters.

It is changing the way it measures its success in response to the changing needs of the community, not in response its recent track record, Ross said.

Still, with its \$30 million shelter and a larger staff and volunteer workforce than any shelter in the region, some expected Seattle Humane to fulfill its promise to increase adoptions and intakes.

“An awful lot of people have no idea that they are doing so little,” said a longtime donor who requested anonymity because they still volunteer at the shelter. “People give millions of dollars to this organization. For that, things should be much better.”

### **The campaign**

Seattle Humane’s fundraising campaign to build a state-of-the-art facility repeatedly [advertised](#) in the past decade that with the new building, “the number of dog, cat and small critters placed into loving homes will increase from 7,000 to 10,000” a year.

Donations poured in, fueling the first major fundraising boon in at least two decades. Donations, the shelter’s primary revenue source, topped \$92 million in the 2010s, nearly quadrupling the amount from the prior decade.

It started a new era for Seattle Humane, founded in 1897 to take in animals before government agencies developed animal control. When the city of Seattle and King County both started open-admission municipal animal shelters in 1972, Seattle Humane moved to Bellevue and focused on adopting out animals, with more selective admissions than the government shelters.

Seattle Humane doesn’t have government contracts, and doesn’t accept many strays. Most of its animals come from other shelters across the country, or are surrendered by owners.

In late 2017, Seattle Humane vacated its old shelter with concrete open-air kennels and chain-link fence doors.

Inside the new, [57,000-square-foot, three-story building](#) is an adoption lobby with decorative orbs hanging from high ceilings, indoor kennels and adoption rooms, and a veterinary center with surgical suites, sterile recovery rooms and a community clinic. It has capacity for 165 cats and 170 dogs, a 35% increase from the previous building.

But internal documents obtained by The Times show that Seattle Humane had not reached the 7,000-animal adoption baseline it declared during the successful fundraising campaign.

Adoptions hit an all-time high in 2018, but were still well short of its advertised goal for its previous, smaller building. The next year, the number of animals adopted fell to 5,668 — exactly one more than in 2015.

Ross called the campaign pledge “obviously aspirational,” adding that reaching 10,000 adopted animals was “always a marketing line.”

“I have no idea who created that, but it was a rally call to try to invigorate donors,” said Ross.



Despite a marginal change in adoptions since 2015, Seattle Humane's spending on adoption services spiked nearly 70%, and its overall expenses rose to \$10.7 million in 2019.

That is in part due to the cost of the new facility, Seattle Humane leaders said. The nonprofit added staff and raised the base pay for employees from \$12 to \$16, although top executives did not get significant increases. Ross earns \$200,000 a year.

Former staff and volunteers said Seattle Humane is not putting its financial and human resources to good use. Many attribute the nonprofit's dip in intake and adoption numbers to wrongheaded policy changes and promotions based on favoritism, which several said had a negative impact on the well-being of dogs.

"I constantly watched how young, adoptable dogs deteriorated, to the point that we started having euthanasia talks about them when we could have started training them months before," said Cameron Mansoori, former dog care supervisor at Seattle Humane who quit in 2019.

### **"Dysfunctional place"**

Seattle Humane relies on more than 2,000 volunteers for day-to-day operations, but in 2019 it outraged a portion of them with a series of new policies.

One change raised concerns about exposing unqualified volunteers to aggressive dogs. Another tasked new volunteers to clean kennels for months before they could work with dogs on behavior training. Both changes were announced without consulting volunteers.

Sara Dobyns, a volunteer for nearly a decade, emailed leadership criticizing program changes implemented without input from volunteers. The director of volunteer services responded: thanks for her work, but they should "part ways." Other volunteers would soon be forced out or quit.

"They could be doing so much for the dogs," Dobyns said. "Such a dysfunctional place. They misrepresent themselves to the general public."

Although Ross contends the tone from the top has changed since he took over in January, some senior leaders have hung on throughout. Staff, donors and volunteers who spoke with The Times were particularly critical of a cluster of managers promoted from its cat department without experience working with dogs.

Staff described managers bringing employees and volunteers to tears, with people using empty rooms — a nursing room, kitchen, closets — to cry. Several who spoke to The Times anonymously described fear of retribution for questioning management.

"If you raise an option that goes against a certain group of individuals, it becomes unbearable," said a former staffer who quit last year and asked for anonymity for fear of retaliation.

### **The "catalyst"**

In summer of 2019, Seattle Humane decided to euthanize Trudeau, a 7-year-old black Labrador mix, to the shock of several staffers and volunteers. His death, combined with frustrations with management and program changes, fueled an internal revolt.

Trudeau's owner had surrendered him to Seattle Humane the previous year. The Lab had acted aggressively toward other dogs but was affectionate toward people, said Donna Rowland and John Bensley, a couple who fostered Trudeau in 2019 and considered adopting him.

"He was very docile, a very lovable dog at home with us," Rowland said.

Seattle Humane wouldn't offer behavioral training for Trudeau unless they adopted him first, the couple said. But when he lunged at another dog, injuring Rowland, Seattle Humane ordered the couple to return him.

The shelter euthanized him three months later, on the eve of July Fourth, giving only two hours' notice to volunteers and staff, listing "extreme stress" as the reason, according to internal documents provided to The Times.

Seattle Humane advertises its lifesaving rate as "one of the highest the country," touting a euthanasia rate of about 1% and no kills for lack of space or time limits. A 2017 Seattle Humane promotional video called "[Saving the Unsaveable](#)" describes rescuing animals that are "unadoptable, unfit, too old," among other conditions.

But at a tense July 2019 town hall meeting with Seattle Humane's board, volunteers and staff accused the nonprofit of ignoring those ideals with Trudeau.

"The decision to euthanize Trudeau, its timing and the communication surrounding it are symptoms of the terrible mismanagement at Seattle Humane," Karen Sparks, a donor and years-long volunteer at the time, wrote to the board. "Trudeau was not out of options; Seattle Humane may not have found an option for him, but they did exist."

It's unclear how many animals Seattle Humane has euthanized over the years. The figures the nonprofit reports to Shelter Animals Count don't align with internal reports provided to The Times by a staff member.

Last year, the shelter euthanized 51 cats and dogs, according to internal reports, but it reported 36 externally. Other data reported to Shelter Animals Count by Seattle Humane do match internal reports.

Seattle Humane disputes that it is minimizing euthanizations. The internal reports include owner-requested euthanasia, as well as some deaths that were counted because of "incorrect coding," Seattle Humane spokesperson Brandon Macz said in an email. "We stand by the data that has been voluntarily reported to (Shelter Animals Count)," he said.

The fallout from the internal revolt corresponded with a decline in Seattle Humane's adoptions and intakes, even as a group of volunteer leaders submitted a report to the board documenting a plummeting number of volunteers.

"They are willing to fire people for asking honest questions. They should be able to answer them," said Stephanie Seek, a donor and volunteer for 10 years.

Seattle Humane's board, stunned by the town hall meeting, commissioned an [independent assessment of programs and facilities for dogs](#). It has not been released, and Seattle Humane declined to share it with the Times. "There's nothing in there that's controversial or pointing to failures in the system," said Ross.

Macz said Seattle Humane implemented "a number of those" recommendations, including increased kennel space and better communication surrounding euthanasia cases.

Ross said that after opening the new shelter, Seattle Humane "had some big speed bumps along the way, but it is regaining its footing." His predecessor held the job less than a year, dying of cancer, amid a time of high staff turnover.

But intake and adoption data shows that Seattle Humane's performance problems persisted beyond the shelter's rocky 2019.

**The pandemic**

Seattle Humane closed its doors to the public and to animals in March 2020. Most of the animals were sent to foster homes, leaving kennels and play areas largely empty. No volunteers and only minimal staff were allowed back in the building for the next 15 months.

Other shelters also scaled down operations but fared far better at meeting a surging demand for pet adoptions in the pandemic.

Auburn Valley Humane Society, Camano Animal Shelter Association and Homeward Pet Adoption in Woodinville managed to coordinate a combined 1,858 dog and cat adoptions between March and December 2020, roughly two-thirds more than the 1,123 coordinated during that time period by Seattle Humane — whose net assets are 13 times larger than the three shelters combined.

Seattle Humane leadership attributed the pandemic performance to a decline in pet transfers, which typically come from crowded shelters or disaster zones across the country. That pipeline slowed during the pandemic, Macz said, and other shelters took in high numbers of strays, driving up intake numbers when transfers slowed, he added.

Only in June, after more than a year since the shutdown, were volunteers allowed back into the building.

Linda Geis, a former senior volunteer and donor, said the shelter “did good things” in the pandemic, such as providing pet food to struggling families. “But we have one of the biggest, state-of-the-art facilities in the country, and we could not find a safe way to attend to dogs? Other shelters found ways,” she said.

### **Future plans**

In defending the shelter’s performance to date, Seattle Humane leaders pointed to an expansion in other services, including veterinary care, but did not provide specific numbers documenting an increase since the shelter’s performance problems first started.

The leaders did provide figures for recent community programs, including a new one that offers temporary shelter to pets while owners are between homes (which served 62 people), and another program that has helped 855 pets be adopted via a national third-party online platform.

Several staffers, donors and volunteers said they were critical of Seattle Humane because they want accountability and change. “We ultimately want Seattle Humane to save the lives it could with the resources it has,” said Kim Reno, a 10-year volunteer who has fostered hundreds of cats.

After struggling to meet its ambitious advertised adoption goals, Seattle Humane leaders [announced recently that it plans to transform the new shelter into a community center](#) and focus on vet care and services to pet owners.

The new plans are aimed at filling gaps in services that smaller nonprofits can’t fill, said Webber, the board chair.

“We’re not going to hide the fact that we have significant resources here,” she added. “We’re very fortunate, so we have a responsibility to put those to the best use and I think that’s what this is leading us to do.”

In September, Seattle Humane’s impressive fundraising machine was at work again at a virtual fundraising event called [Tuxes and Tails](#). While Seattle Humane touted its future plans, leaders didn’t mention its past performance problems.

“This new chapter leverages everything about what we do here at the shelter, our sphere of influence in the community and the great work that we do every day, and it amplifies it and takes it to the next level,” Ross said during a speech that night.

	In less than two hours, Seattle Humane raised \$1.3 million.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Antarctica once land of fire and not ice</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/science/antarctica-wildfires.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/science/antarctica-wildfires.html</a>
GIST	<p>Imagine the forests of Chilean Patagonia: wet and cold, dense with <a href="#">monkey puzzle trees</a> and other hardy conifers. Now imagine it with dinosaurs walking around. And on fire.</p> <p>This is what Antarctica was like 75 million years ago during the Cretaceous period, an era known by researchers as a “super fire world.” <a href="#">A paper</a> published last month in Polar Research by Flaviana Jorge de Lima of the Federal University of Pernambuco and other scientists in Brazil proves that these conflagrations did not spare any continent, even one that is today notorious for its dry, inhospitable climate and largely vegetation-free landscape.</p> <p>Although research on prehistoric wildfires — properly called “paleofires” — has been going on for decades, much of it has concentrated on the Northern Hemisphere. Antarctica was “first considered a region without high fires, but that changed,” said André Jasper of the University of Taquari Valley in Brazil. He’s an author on the paper and part of <a href="#">a group of researchers around the globe</a> seeking evidence of fires that burned between 60 million and 300 million years ago.</p> <p>“It’s really interesting for us because now we’re showing that not only the Northern Hemisphere was burning, but the Southern Hemisphere too,” he said. “It was global.”</p> <p>Scientists can find evidence of paleofires by studying charred tree rings, by analyzing sediment in ancient lakes or by examining molecules in fossilized charcoal. For this paper, the researchers analyzed charcoal extracted from sediment on Antarctica’s James Ross Island in 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>This charcoal is, on its face, nothing special.</p> <p>“If you do a barbecue, you will have the same type of material,” Dr. Jasper said. But the team used imaging software and scanning electron microscopy to analyze these lustrous chunks, about the height of a quarter and several times as wide. They found something far more interesting than the remains of a cookout: homogenized cells and a pitted pattern that proved these fossils started their lives as ancient plants.</p> <p>Using the charcoal, “it is possible to understand a little bit better the scenario of the fire, 75 million years ago,” Dr. Jasper said.</p> <p>With increasingly sophisticated techniques, scientists can reconstruct ancient ecosystems and fire patterns with mounting precision, said Elisabeth Dietze, vice president of the International Paleofire Network, who was not affiliated with the study. She said that molecular markers in charcoal could tell scientists what kind of vegetation burned: For example, rounder, plated molecular shapes indicate woody biomass.</p> <p>In 2010, researchers on King George Island first gathered evidence that ancient wildfires didn’t spare Antarctica. But the samples from that expedition were poorly preserved and researchers could only speculate that the charcoal stemmed from a coniferous tree. Researchers made a more accurate assessment of these new charred remains: They suspect they came from an Araucariaceae, an ancient family of conifers.</p> <p>For paleofire researchers, the next big question about these ancient fires concerns causality. The Cretaceous period was marked by mass extinctions, fluctuating amounts of oxygen in the atmosphere and changes in the amount of vegetation covering the planet. Did fires cause these changes, or did the changes cause the fires? Understanding this super fire world helps researchers develop models for periods of rapid ecological change and increasing numbers of fires — like now.</p>

	<p>“The more we know about the past and the linkages between the ecosystem and climate, the better prepared we are for the future,” said Cathy Whitlock of Montana State University, who was not affiliated with the study.</p> <p>In some ways the era humans live in can’t compare to the Cretaceous: Back then, our continents, including Antarctica, were still forming. But it’s still notable that high-latitude regions were warm, forested, ice-free and prone to blazes — a direction in which we might be moving.</p> <p>“Of course, this was millions of years ago, but now we have a driver,” Dr. Jasper said. “We are the driver. Nowadays we have humans putting fire on everything.”</p> <p>Case in point: In 2018, researchers moved these charcoal samples from the National Museum of Brazil to a different laboratory. A few months later, the museum caught fire and the country lost countless relics. These ancient chunks of charcoal, used to unlock the secrets of deep time, were themselves nearly lost in flames.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Farmers could run short on fertilizer</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/washington-farmers-use-nearly-2-million-tons-of-fertilizer-a-year-its-getting-much-more-expensive/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/washington-farmers-use-nearly-2-million-tons-of-fertilizer-a-year-its-getting-much-more-expensive/</a>
GIST	<p>Believe it or not, the world is running short on fertilizer.</p> <p>The missing fertilizer is not the bovine kind, and that’s part of the problem facing farmers. Unlike the poop-derived plant food of old, most modern fertilizer relies on nitrogen and ammonia produced with fossil fuels. Rather than mine Pacific islands frequented by seabirds, fertilizer manufacturers crack their nitrogen from natural gas, a commodity that’s grown increasingly expensive.</p> <p>Last week, executives with Louisiana-based CF Industries Holdings, owner of the world’s largest nitrogen plant, <a href="#">told farmers there will likely be less fertilizer available</a>, which could cut corn yields and drive up food prices. Food inflation is already a concern, <a href="#">as Bloomberg has reported</a>, with a United Nations gauge of global prices at a decade high.</p> <p>U.S. prices for some fertilizers have more than doubled in 2021, according to Bloomberg’s Green Markets unit. Analysts have raised concerns that farmers simply won’t be able to buy at these prices.</p> <p>What that’ll mean for Washington farms is as yet unclear, but it won’t be good, said John Stuhlmiller, CEO of the Washington Farm Bureau. Agricultural producers in the state used about <a href="#">1.7 million tons of fertilizer between July 2019 and June 2020</a>, according to the state Department of Agriculture. Nitrogen-based fertilizers accounted for 527,581 tons of that total, the largest share. (Farmers also spread 825 tons of fish scraps, and 184 tons of dried blood.)</p> <p>Inflation, <a href="#">supply chain problems</a> and a chronic labor shortage turned acute by the coronavirus pandemic mean farmers are already facing rising costs they can’t make up on the market, Stuhlmiller said.</p> <p>“Growers will grow,” Stuhlmiller said. “People are just making it work right now, feeding the world. It’s rough.”</p> <p>As the situation stands, though, farmers worry they’ll face “stagflation” reminiscent of the 1980s, when rising costs and stagnant crop prices wracked the agricultural sector, he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 ‘Havana Syndrome’ plagues State Dept.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2021-11-05/blinker-pledges-to-solve-mystery-of-havana-syndrome-but-stops-short-of-calling-the-incidents-attacks">https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2021-11-05/blinker-pledges-to-solve-mystery-of-havana-syndrome-but-stops-short-of-calling-the-incidents-attacks</a>

## GIST

Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday pledged greater support to those who have been injured as a result of "Havana Syndrome" and defended the government's response to what some consider the use of directed energy weapons. But he stopped short of calling the incidents "attacks" – a break from the Trump administration and a continuing source of frustration from many who have experienced symptoms.

"All of us in the U.S. government, and especially we at the State Department, are intently focused on getting to the bottom of what and who is causing these incidents," Blinken said in a carefully crafted statement from the State Department, speaking alongside newly appointed officials who will oversee further investigations into the incidents and the medical response for those who appear to have been affected by them.

"This is an urgent priority for President [Joe] Biden, for me, for our entire government. And we will do absolutely everything we can, leaving no stone unturned, to stop these occurrences as swiftly as possible," Blinken said.

Reports of startling symptoms affecting U.S. officials based in Havana, such as prolonged dizziness, headaches and disorientation, first emerged in 2017 and were followed by similar reports from every continent except Antarctica. Two cases of the mysterious syndrome even occurred at the White House twice last year.

Reporting on the incidents quickly drew speculation of some form of a new weapon developed by Russia or China that was being tested on unsuspecting Americans – a conclusion doubted by some scientists who question the logistical hurdles and purpose of such a mission.

It also remains unclear whether any of the incidents are linked. If the symptoms were the result of a new weapon, the circumstances of employing it differ greatly between far-flung American outposts in foreign lands versus the center of the nation's capital.

However, they swiftly seized the attention of the Trump administration at the time and marshalled swift responses from Congress, including the rare unanimous bipartisan passage of the HAVANA Act (Helping American Victims Afflicted by Neurological Attacks), which President Joe Biden signed into law last month.

"We are bringing to bear the full resources of the U.S. government to make available first-class medical care to those affected and to get to the bottom of these incidents, including to determine the cause and who is responsible," Biden said in a statement at the time. He also did not refer to the incidents as attacks.

Despite the rare collective focus from across the government, its handling of the particulars of the incidents has drawn condemnation from some corners. Many diplomats on a phone call with Blinken in September expressed dismay that the department, while acknowledging the suffering of some, would not rule out that the symptoms could have been caused by some form of mass hysteria. They also expressed concern that the department shied away from using the term "attacks," instead favoring "unexplained health incidents," or UHIs, and claiming stress or aging may have caused some symptoms.

"It's those sorts of sickening statements that perpetuate this disbelief," one of the diplomats told NBC News at the time. "Don't act like it's nothing. Don't call it freaking UHIs. Don't talk about our stress levels."

Those on the call also identified shortcomings in the diplomatic service's medical response – a flaw Blinken appeared to acknowledge on Friday. He announced the formation of new partnerships with Johns Hopkins University to help provide medical care to existing programs the State Department offers to its employees and their families. Blinken also encouraged all of the State Department's personnel to report suspected incidents and said it had developed new technology and processes to identify and analyze them.

The announcements follow claims that the department previously attempted to cover up the incidents and acted too late in response. Politico last month revealed that State was ramping up investigations into

	<p>diplomats who were experiencing mysterious brain injuries more than two years before Congress became aware of those concerns.</p> <p>In response to shouted questions before departing on Friday, Blinken said, "People have been profoundly affected by this. And when you sit down with our people and hear what's happened to them, how they've been affected, it's very, very powerful."</p> <p>"It only reinforces in me the absolute conviction that we need to do everything possible for our people to care for them, to protect them, and to get to the bottom of what happened," he added. "But you can't help but be personally affected when you hear directly from our folks their stories."</p> <p>"We will get to the bottom of this, and meanwhile we will do everything we can to care for our people."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Airlines' frequent flier programs changing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/travel/airline-loyalty-programs.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=Travel">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/travel/airline-loyalty-programs.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=Travel</a>
GIST	<p>The pandemic made an oxymoron of the term "frequent flier," as the number of airline passengers plummeted in the early days of the lockdown. Leisure travel has recovered somewhat, but the more lucrative business travel market is still way off, with recovery not expected until 2023 and perhaps not even then.</p> <p>It's a challenging time to keep fliers loyal. Many are not traveling because of coronavirus concerns, and those who are can be enticed to try out other airlines because they are not flying enough to earn status. Others may be disenchanted with airline loyalty programs, which, in the years leading up to the pandemic, had <a href="#">made upgrades and free tickets more elusive</a>.</p> <p>In the meantime, airlines are also facing pressure on the climate front and while evidence suggests loyalty programs <a href="#">aren't large contributors to climate change</a>, they do encourage flying, which feels out of step with the current moment.</p> <p>Here are some ways airlines are changing their loyalty programs in the face of the new realities presented by the pandemic and the pressures of climate change.</p> <p><b>Airlines make it easier to stick with the program</b></p> <p>Over the past 18 months, each airline <a href="#">has taken a different approach</a> to hanging on to its biggest spenders, but their goal is the same: to make it easier for customers who have achieved status to keep it. <a href="#">Alaska Airlines</a>, for example, is giving a 50 percent mileage bonus to its customers for all flights they take in 2021. <a href="#">United Airlines</a> has lowered the required number of flights and spending needed to get to each level of its loyalty program. For instance, Premier Silver, the lowest tier, can be reached with 12 flights, along with 3,000 points (related to dollars spent) rather than 16 flights and 4,000 points.</p> <p>United has also been hosting dinners with Premier fliers to understand their priorities as they return to flying. "We're committed to being flexible," said Michael Covey, the managing director of United's MileagePlus program. "We are monitoring demand and making adjustments."</p> <p><a href="#">American Airlines</a> has reduced its minimum requirements for 2021 and vastly streamlined its program for 2022. Currently, Gold, the lowest level, can be had for 20,000 miles or 20 flight segments, along with \$2,000 in spending, down from 25,000 miles or 30 flight segments, plus \$3,000 in spending. Beginning in 2022, <a href="#">the airline recently announced</a>, it will simplify its AAdvantage program so that branded credit card spending and flights would contribute to a single sum of "Loyalty Points," rather than asking fliers to reach separate spending and flying thresholds.</p> <p><a href="#">Delta Air Lines</a> is extending all frequent fliers' status an additional year, through January 2023 and counting any miles flown in 2021 or 2022 toward status in 2023. Travelers get bonus miles when they fly,</p>



and for the first time, earn miles on “award” flights — those purchased with miles. Travelers who flew and spent enough to meet status requirements will be prioritized ahead of those fliers who kept their status through an extension, when it comes to free upgrades.

### **Earning and spending more points on the ground**

All major airlines offer branded credit cards which allow customers to accrue points or miles that can be used to buy flights, and during the pandemic, they continued the practice of dangling tens of thousands of points as incentives to buy in. Alaska Airlines offers 50,000 bonus miles and a low-priced companion fare ticket after the credit card holder makes \$2,000 of purchases in the first three months of use. A recent Delta Sky Miles Platinum American Express Card offer promised 90,000 miles that could be used to purchase flights and 10,000 Medallion Qualification Miles that could be used to reach status levels after \$3,000 of spending in the first three months, and with an annual card fee of \$250.

“Branded credit cards are of extreme importance to airlines” both as sources of revenue and because they increase interactions between the brand and the customer, said Alex Miller, the founder of the travel blog, [Upgraded Points](#).

As consumers shifted their spending in response to pandemic conditions, airlines followed with special offers linked to their branded credit cards. When lockdowns started lifting, for example, Alaska offered promotional bonus miles on restaurant spending. Points earned can be redeemed for things like rental cars and hotels.

Partnering with other companies offers “quick wins to keep customers interested,” said Gilbert Ott, founder of the travel blog [God Save The Points](#). So in addition to awarding status to a flyer who racks up tens of thousands of points or dollars spent, airlines are rewarding customers more frequently for specific actions, Mr. Ott said.

Ray Lane, an Alaska spokesman, wrote in an email that the company also offered limited-time opportunities for members to earn “elite qualifying miles” (miles that can help fliers make status) by spending with their Alaska credit cards, not just miles that could be redeemed for flights. That’s “not part of our standard card offering,” he wrote.

Mr. Ott said airlines are taking a more holistic view of their relationship with fliers. “Just rewarding them for flying more is not enough for the success of the business or to meet the climate goals they’ve committed to,” he said.

### **Mileage runs and climate change**

Aviation [contributes to global climate change](#) and to help combat it, the major U.S. airlines, along with other companies, like FedEx and UPS, announced in March that they were committed to achieving [net-zero carbon emissions by 2050](#). Changing frequent flier programs to de-emphasize the number of miles flown is one way to discourage unnecessary flights.

That change in focus dovetails with a trend set in motion before the pandemic: American, United and Delta had begun rewarding program members based on a combination of their yearly spending and their flights, rather than just flights. The shift allowed them to prioritize those customers — including first-class ticket buyers and business travelers — who generated the most profit.

More recently, United has changed its status-tier goals to tally “segments” (number of flights flown) rather than how far those flights go. “We don’t want a plane full of people flying to Singapore just to get the miles,” said United’s Mr. Covey. “That’s not good for us or the environment.”

Rejiggering incentives can help squelch the practice of taking an unnecessary flight at the end of the year, a so-called “mileage run,” just to make it to a status threshold. For those who are close to making it to a higher tier though, the temptation is still there.

Tom Boehland, 58, moved with his wife to Dallas to be closer to family in 2020, but still commutes to Minneapolis a few times each month for work as president of a juice company, Citrus Systems. “I’ve been known to take the long way home, through L.A., to get more miles,” he said. By the summer, he had plenty of miles, but his wife, who was close to reaching American Airlines Executive Platinum status, was not quite there, so the pair took a jaunt to Hawaii over Labor Day. “We took a short vacation to satisfy the requirements,” Mr. Boehland said. “Status does matter. You get used to boarding early, upgrades to comfort or first-class seats.”

It’s difficult to estimate the number of mileage runs taken each year, according to Mr. Miller of Upgraded Points, but he notes that they are a tiny part of reducing carbon emissions. The biggest lever is using more sustainable fuel, according to the global industry association [IATA](#). Gains in operations and infrastructure efficiency — for example, making planes lighter so they use less fuel and flying the most direct air traffic control routes — are the next important areas for improvement.

Airlines must examine what travelers need now, said Dr. John Niser, director of the [International School of Hospitality, Sports, and Tourism Management](#) at Fairleigh Dickinson University. What new offerings might their fliers value? How can they show customers that they are trying to minimize their environmental impact? The industry is going to have to look beyond just updating their loyalty programs, he said, to succeed in the new normal.

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HEADLINE	11/05 Town declares itself constitutional republic
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/05/california-constitutional-republic-covid-restrictions">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/05/california-constitutional-republic-covid-restrictions</a>
GIST	<p>A northern <a href="#">California</a> town has declared itself a “constitutional republic” in response to Covid-19 health restrictions imposed by the governor, in the latest sign of strife between the state’s government and its rural and conservative regions.</p> <p>The city council in Oroville, located at the base of the Sierra Nevada foothills about 90 miles from the capital of Sacramento, <a href="#">adopted a resolution</a> this week stating it would oppose state and federal orders it deems to be government overreach.</p> <p>Oroville leaders said the designation was a way of affirming the city’s values and pushing back against state rules it doesn’t agree with, although a legal expert said the designation was merely a gesture and did not grant the city any new authority.</p> <p>Tensions have existed throughout the pandemic between the rural north and California’s leadership, which has been among the first to implement lockdowns, mask mandates and vaccination requirements.</p> <p>In Butte county, fierce opposition to Covid lockdowns and school closures drove support for recalling the state’s governor, Gavin Newsom, with 51% of voters in the county backing the ultimately <a href="#">failed effort</a>. Newsom’s policies, however, appear to have worked and the state had the lowest Covid infection rate in the US last month.</p> <p>Last year, Oroville <a href="#">refused to enforce</a> state requirements prohibiting indoor dining. Butte county, where Oroville is located, <a href="#">declined</a> to recommend a mask mandate earlier this fall, even as cases surged and a local medical center reported <a href="#">treating more patients</a> than at any other point during the pandemic.</p> <p>Before passing the resolution, council members argued they were taking a stand and advocating for residents to make their own health choices.</p> <p>“I assure you folks that great thought was put into every bit of this,” the city’s mayor, Chuck Reynolds, said. “Nobody willy-nilly threw something to grandstand.”</p> <p>But the city’s declaration does not shield it from following federal and state laws, said Lisa Pruitt, a rural law expert at the University of California, Davis, who said it was not clear what the designation meant.</p>

“A municipality cannot unilaterally declare itself not subject to the laws of the state of California,” Pruitt said. “Whatever they mean by constitutional republic you can’t say hocus pocus and make it happen.”

Leaders in the city of 20,000 say the resolution is an effort to push back against state government and affirm the city’s values and commitment to the constitution. Oroville drafted its resolution from scratch after not finding any examples of other cities with similar resolutions, said Scott Thomson, the city’s vice-mayor.

“I proposed it after 18 months of increasingly intrusive executive mandates and what I felt to be excessive overreach by our government,” said Thomson. “After the failed recall in California, our state governor seems to [be] on a rampage and the mandates are getting more intrusive. Now he’s going after our kids and schools.”

The majority of speakers at the Oroville city council meeting expressed their support for their resolution – applauding its introduction and calling council members “heroes” – with several specifically citing the state’s [vaccine requirement](#) for schoolchildren.

“We’re hoping that becoming a constitutional republic city is the best step in order to regain and maintain our inalienable rights protected by the constitution of the United States. What will be left if we don’t have that? if we don’t have bodily autonomy?” one speaker said in tears. “What else are they gonna want me to let them do to my kids? Where does it stop?”

The resolution does not affect local schools, which fall under the purview of the school district, Thomson said, but is a way for the community to declare it will not use city resources to implement state rules it does not agree with.

“We’re not ignorant that there are serious issues at hand, we just do not agree with the way it’s being handled.”

One council member argued that mandates were “political theater” and that the immune system is the best defense against disease. The best protection against Covid-19 is vaccination – Butte county has a vaccination rate of 48%, according to [New York Times](#) data.

The council approved the resolution by a 6-1 vote on Tuesday, even as one member who voted in favor of it warned residents it had “no teeth” and was a “political statement”.

The city’s efforts tap in to a common sentiment in rural northern California that the region is ignored, but also over-governed by the state, Pruitt said. Signs for the state of Jefferson, a movement to secede from California, are common here. But, Pruitt says, the city’s gesture does not grant it more power or the ability to ignore state law.

“It seems to make the people of Oroville feel better that their city council has made this gesture but as a practical matter it doesn’t make any difference,” Pruitt said.

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HEADLINE	11/05 Free parking spaces hidden climate cost
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/05/us-free-parking-spaces-climate-cost">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/05/us-free-parking-spaces-climate-cost</a>
GIST	<p>The street space occupied by parked cars may not seem like much, but it adds up. The US has an estimated <a href="#">3.4 spaces</a> for every car. In New York City, the amount of road space reserved for parking is roughly the <a href="#">size of 12 Central Parks</a>, according to one estimate, and most of the city’s 4m street parking spots are free.</p> <p>“The curb lane is some of the most valuable land on Earth,” said Donald Shoup, a transportation professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. “I think that’s our biggest mistake, to take some of the most valuable land on Earth and give it away, free, to cars.”</p>

Street parking doesn't just take away space. It can inform how people get around. "Parking is one of the things that has a really powerful impact on people's decisions whether to drive or not," said Daniel Firth, transportation director at C40 Cities, a network of more than 100 cities around the world with ambitious climate goals.

Shoup and others have found that underpriced street parking [keeps people driving in cities](#), even in those that have good alternative transport options. More people driving means more city traffic – increasing congestion and pumping out pollution.

But cities that want to price, or even convert, free street parking face obstacles – and not just from drivers. Most cities don't have enough information about how their curbs are used, making it difficult to decide how to manage this valuable space.

Companies offering curb management technology have sprung up to try to fill this gap, with promises to help cities reclaim their curbs. Their digital platforms map parking spaces and curb use around cities.

Having the information in one place and being able to visualize curb spaces on a map is vital, said Peter Richards, who leads the development of software product CurbIQ at Canadian consulting company IBI Group. CurbIQ was born out of years of working on parking strategy projects for cities and realizing cities don't have easily-accessible, digitized information about their curbs, Richards said.

The endgame is to help cities reduce car numbers – along with congestion, noise, and pollution – while making better use of spaces and still meeting people's mobility needs.

The prospect of snagging a free or cheap street parking spot compared with an expensive off-street spot keeps drivers cruising, said Shoup, who has led surveys of drivers stopped at city traffic lights to ask them why they are driving. In one instance, 68% of the drivers surveyed in a Los Angeles neighborhood were cruising for a parking spot.

The availability of free street parking can also inflate car ownership. A [study](#) of the four biggest cities in the Netherlands, found that higher parking costs in city centres accounted for about 30% of the lower car ownership rates compared with the outskirts. "You can reduce car ownership quite significantly by making parking more expensive or by reducing the amount of parking you build," said Jacob Baskin, the co-founder of Coord, an NYC-based curb management company.

And there is data to show city residents may prefer less parking. A [survey](#) of London residents found that their top choice for using curb space was to plant trees, Shoup said. Parking ranked fifth.

One of the first steps that CurbIQ and Coord do for cities is to lay out digitized information about the existing permitted uses of curbs on a map – usually by driving around and using machine vision software to capture the street signs – forming the foundation of a city's curb management platform. "It's a lot easier to make decisions and plan when you have all this information together," said Richards.

During Covid, the political barriers to reclaiming curb spaces from free street parking were removed, said Maya Ben Dror, who leads transportation at the World Economic Forum. Commuters started working from home, freeing up parking spaces. Meanwhile, restaurants and other businesses needed outdoor space in cities. That allowed curb management companies to really grow during the pandemic, she said.

Cities used Coord's platform, said Baskin, to figure out "here's where we have space where we think we can repurpose, to either be restaurant seating or pickup and drop-off space, in ways that will benefit the city".

During the summer of 2021, IBI staff used CurbIQ's software to help the City of Toronto launch its CafeTO program that allowed restaurants to set up patios on appropriate curb space – identifying those far enough away from fire hydrants, traffic intersections or transit stops. Having a map of curb spaces and their regulations helped the city move quickly, said Richards.

Coord is working with cities such as Aspen, Colorado, to designate smart zones – curb spaces reserved for gig and delivery drivers to book through an app when they are approaching their destinations. Home deliveries and ride-shares continue to rise in popularity and drivers need temporary curb space to complete pick ups and drop offs safely. When free street parking dominates, drivers either have to circle around the neighborhood looking for parking or simply double park, holding up traffic, increasing pollution, and endangering pedestrians and bicyclists.

“Double parking can really snag up traffic,” said Baskin. “People hate it.” Smart zones could help cities manage the competition for curb space among these drivers and ease congestion from their cruising, said Dror. Both Coord and CurbIQ are working to quantify the tangible benefits, such as reduced emissions.

Many businesses will reflexively object to the conversion of free parking spaces in front of their shops, fearing a loss of customers. But often, business owners overestimate how much their customers are arriving by car, said Firth. A study in Seattle found that sales revenue increased 5.4% among downtown restaurants after paid parking hours were extended, Richards said, because more customers were coming and going. “Instinctively, everyone’s like if you got rid of free parking, our business will die. That is wrong,” he said.

Street parking is so ubiquitous that converting it feels like a loss. It is a powerful psychology that makes many resistant to the idea, said Firth. “We value the loss of something much greater than the gain of something else.”

The patios, parklets, and bike lanes that took over street parking spaces during the pandemic has shown the possible uses of a city curb other than to store empty cars. “There’s been this little space where we can demonstrate, first of all, the loss of the parking was maybe not as bad as people thought, and the gain of the patio was way better than people thought it would be,” Firth said.

Converting space could also help cities move more efficiently and more sustainably, said Dror. Cars travelling on a single 10-ft-wide lane move about 1,600 people an hour in cities, whereas converting the same lane to a protected, two-way bike lane, for instance, would allow 7,500 people to get around. A lane delineated for transit, whether for buses or trains, could move 8,000 people an hour, she said. “If we were to use a lane, which is a public space, more efficiently, we would seek to use it for something that is healthier for people and for the air.”

Any efforts that help us shift away from driving and towards shared and active modes of transport such as walking, biking, scooting, or public transit are key to tackling the climate crisis, said Dror. Making systemic changes in the way we get around could help prevent an additional million tons of carbon emissions a year by 2050, on top of those saved by electrifying vehicles, she said. And as the time that we have left to limit climate change effectively dwindles, every ton of greenhouse gas that we don’t emit counts.

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HEADLINE	11/06 Overlooked? Blue carbon to save world?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/06/dangerous-blindspot-why-overlooking-blue-carbon-could-sink-us">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/06/dangerous-blindspot-why-overlooking-blue-carbon-could-sink-us</a>
GIST	<p>When the ambitious plan to allow <a href="#">sea water to flood over the Steart peninsula in Somerset</a> was completed in 2014, critics called it a waste of money. Floods had recently blighted the nearby area, and some local people argued the £20m spent on creating a new 250-hectare (617-acre) salt marsh would have been better spent on other flood-prevention projects.</p> <p>Seven years ago, the concept of “blue carbon” – how marine ecosystems store carbon – was in its infancy. Some research had looked at how mangrove forests absorb carbon, but little was known about how effective seagrass and salt marshes also were at absorbing greenhouse gas emissions.</p>



The two groups behind the salt marsh – the Environment Agency and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) – barely mentioned the climate. They said the purpose of the marsh was to protect the coast from erosion and create a new valuable habitat for birdlife. [Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP for Bridgwater and West Somerset](#), called the marsh an “extravagant, ridiculous scheme” that put birds ahead of humans.

Less than eight years later, however, everything has changed. Blue carbon is at the forefront of the fight against the climate crisis – and as world leaders gather at [Cop26](#), evidence has emerged that the Steart marsh could be a more powerful carbon sink than anybody imagined.

Scientists at Manchester Metropolitan University found that Steart marshes absorbed 19 tonnes of organic carbon a hectare every year, or [18,000 tonnes in four years](#) – the equivalent of eliminating the greenhouse gas emissions of 32,900 cars. Their work is part of a growing body of research suggesting blue carbon is an order of magnitude more efficient than its terrestrial equivalent.

“The carbon storage at Steart is phenomenal,” says Tim McGrath, head of project development at WWT, which manages the salt marsh. “These exceptional findings could indicate that the carbon storage potential of restoring salt marsh around the UK coast has been underestimated.”

It would take 100 years for a woodland to sequester and store as much carbon as Steart can store in six years, McGrath says. “Trees and peat can take us so far, but blue carbon ecosystems, such as salt marshes, can take us further. It’s time governments seized this opportunity.”

But as [world leaders at Cop26 earlier pledge to end deforestation by 2030](#), campaigners and marine conservationists say the powerful carbon sinks in the ocean are being overlooked. Only [43 out of 113 countries to submit greenhouse gas inventories](#), or nationally determined contributions (NDCs), have included blue carbon ecosystems as part of their mitigation measures. The UK, despite being a coastal nation with vast reserves of potential blue carbon, is one of those to failing to do so.

“If we are not protecting and counting the blue carbon in our seas, this leaves a dangerous blindspot” for UK policy, says Ailsa McLellan, coordinator for Our Seas, a coalition of Scottish businesses, communities and environmental groups. “It’s time we counted blue carbon, reinstated a limit on damaging methods of fishing, and put future generations first.”

One study suggests [bottom trawling could release as much carbon as global aviation emissions](#). Our Seas is calling on Kwasi Kwarteng, the business secretary, to establish an accounting system for blue carbon, so that marine and coastal ecosystems, including salt marshes, can be protected as part of the UK’s efforts to meet its climate goals.

“Blue carbon habitats are some of the most effective carbon sequestration habitats, area for area, on the planet,” says Bill Austin, professor in ocean science at St Andrews University and chair of the Scottish government’s blue carbon forum. He is working on a government-funded “salt marsh code” that could allow companies to invest in restoration schemes.

For now, blue carbon remains a bit of an outlier when it comes to carbon credits. Out of the big three coastal wetlands, says Austin, mangroves are the best studied, followed by salt marshes and then seagrass. “There is definitely scope for us to raise our ambition” by including blue carbon in the UK’s NDCs, he says.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs says the UK recognises the important role blue carbon habitats can play in carbon sequestration, as well as preventing biodiversity loss and building resilience to climate crises: “The ocean plays a vital role in climate mitigation, and we continue to build the evidence base on blue carbon habitats as we strive towards net zero.”

That is a coded way of saying that the science of blue carbon is relatively young. The term was coined in 2009. Recent research estimates that conserving and restoring [blue carbon ecosystems could remove the equivalent of 3% of annual global greenhouse emissions](#).

But the future is another country – and one leading expert predicts that, over time, the ocean’s contribution towards mitigating climate emissions could soar.

Carlos Duarte, a professor of marine science at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia and one of the paper’s authors, says 3% was a “conservative estimate” because the scope for restoration of some ecosystems could be larger than previously believed.

“It is very well understood for mangroves, not well understood for salt marshes and very poorly understood for seagrass,” says Duarte. “We have huge gaps in our knowledge of the amount of seagrass in the ocean. The scope for restoring seagrass could be as much as five or 10 times larger than what we thought.”

The contribution of blue carbon to mitigating climate emissions could be as high as 10% to 15%, he predicts, if “all blue carbon strategies are activated”, including as yet unexplored possibilities such as more seaweed farming, avoiding disturbing sediments on continental shelves, restoring kelp forests and protecting whales.

Other scientists caution that uncertainty in some areas, such as seaweed farms and kelp – neither of which are included in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s greenhouse gas emission inventory – makes accurate predictions difficult.

That’s why Duarte wants to study these areas. He is working with Oceans 2050, an organisation run by Alexandra Cousteau, the granddaughter of the oceanographer Jacques, to sample sediments from seaweed farms in 12 countries to find out how much carbon they really soak up.

“I would be hard-pressed to find a climate-mitigation solution that has been proven to be as effective as blue carbon,” says Duarte. “Some people worry that 3% is too little to worry about. To these people in search of solutions that are going to magically deliver many betagrammes of emission, I tell them there are no low-hanging betagrammes.”

There is no time to waste arguing over exactly how much blue carbon can help us cut emissions; all options must be pursued, Duarte says. Blue carbon ecosystems do not just reduce emissions: they help fight the other crisis, such as biodiversity loss and preventing natural disasters.

Blue carbon, he says, has been overlooked for too long. “By the time we find these solutions that can deliver 5% of the job, we will be in 2050 – and we will be burning.”

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	11/06 Police: Federal Way shooting; 2 injured
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/two-shot-in-federal-way-police-looking-for-suspect">https://komonews.com/news/local/two-shot-in-federal-way-police-looking-for-suspect</a>
GIST	<p>FEDERAL WAY, Wash. - An investigation is underway after two people were shot at a residence in Federal Way Saturday.</p> <p>Federal Way Police say officers responded to reports of a shooting in the 33300 block of 24th Ave SW just before 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>A 31-year-old male and a 27-year-old male were both shot. They were transferred to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.</p> <p>A preliminary investigation found that the shots were fired into a targeted residence at the location of the shooting.</p>



	No information on possible suspects has been released.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Tacoma drive-by shooting: 3 injured</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/three-injured-in-tacoma-drive-by-shooting-asked-nearby-firefighters-for-help">https://www.q13fox.com/news/three-injured-in-tacoma-drive-by-shooting-asked-nearby-firefighters-for-help</a>
GIST	<p><b>TACOMA, Wash.</b> - <a href="#">Tacoma</a> Police are investigating a shooting that left three people injured late Friday night.</p> <p>Authorities confirmed that Tacoma Fire was responding to a fire call at a hotel building, when a car rolled up to them. Three people inside had gunshot wounds and they asked firefighters for help. Police and more firefighters quickly responded and rendered aid.</p> <p>The victims told police the shooting happened near 27th Street and Commerce.</p> <p>They say they were stopped at a red light when another car pulled up next to them and started shooting at them. Out of the five people in the car, three were hit. Police describe the victims as a 15-year-old boy, 21-year-old man and 24-year-old woman.</p> <p>None of the injuries are life-threatening, police confirm.</p> <p>There is currently no information on the suspect vehicle or people responsible.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Armed men seize Congo villages</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/armed-men-seize-congo-villages-near-uganda-rwanda-border-2021-11-08/">https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/armed-men-seize-congo-villages-near-uganda-rwanda-border-2021-11-08/</a>
GIST	<p>GOMA, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nov 8 (Reuters) - Gunmen seized at least two villages overnight in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo near the border with Uganda and Rwanda, a local official and an activist group said on Monday.</p> <p>Lieutenant-Colonel Muhindo Luanzo, assistant to the administrator of Rutshuru territory, blamed fighters from the M23, a rebel group that seized large swathes of territory in 2012 and 2013.</p> <p>The two villages, Tshanzu and Runyoni, were the last redoubts of the M23 before they were chased by Congolese and United Nations forces into Uganda and Rwanda in 2013.</p> <p>Since then, there have been regional efforts to demobilise the fighters, but the group has complained about the slow pace at which a peace accord has been implemented, and some have returned to Congo.</p> <p>It was not immediately possible to confirm the identity of the armed men who took over the two villages. M23 officials and spokespeople for Congo's army and government did not immediately respond to requests for comment.</p> <p>Luanzo said the gunmen stormed Tshanzu and Runyoni simultaneously at around 11 p.m. on Sunday night.</p> <p>"Now our troops are conducting counter-attack operations because during the night they identified the enemy coming from Rwanda," Luanzo told Reuters by telephone.</p> <p>U.N. investigators have accused Rwanda and Uganda, which intervened militarily in Congo during two regional wars two decades ago, of supporting the M23. The two countries deny this.</p> <p>A local activist group reported clashes with light and heavy weapons on Sunday night that forced people out of their homes and across the border at Bunagana into Uganda.</p>

	<p>"Uganda is experiencing an influx of refugees from DR-Congo," said Irene Nakasiita from Uganda's Red Cross society.</p> <p>On Sunday evening the United States issued a security alert, warning of a potential attack on the provincial capital of Goma, which is around 50 km (31 miles) to the southwest of the two villages, and advising its personnel to shelter in place.</p> <p>All major streets in Goma were later filled with soldiers, a Reuters journalist said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Italy massive mafia trial; 91 convicted</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.the-sun.com/news/4019282/massive-mafia-trial-100-gangsters-convicted/">https://www.the-sun.com/news/4019282/massive-mafia-trial-100-gangsters-convicted/</a>
GIST	<p>AN Italian court has convicted nearly 100 mobsters in the biggest mafia trial in decades.</p> <p>Defendants from the powerful and feared 'Ndrangheta group — including a boss's right-hand man and the head of a military wing — faced charges including attempted murder and extortion.</p> <p>Judge Claudio Paris read out verdicts and sentences against 91 defendants in the massive call centre, which had been converted into a courtroom in the Calabrian city of Lamezia Terme.</p> <p>Some of the group's most dangerous members received the maximum 20-year sentence requested by prosecutors.</p> <p>They included Domenico Macri of the group's military wing plus Pasquale Gallone, the right-hand man of alleged mob boss Luigi Mancuso, whose trial is still pending.</p> <p>More than 300 people have yet to be judged in proceedings that are expected to last two years or longer.</p> <p>That procedure, which took place behind closed doors, allowed them to have a third of their sentence shaved off if they were convicted.</p> <p>Since January, the specially adapted courtroom has hosted the "maxi trial" of hundreds of suspects affiliated with the Ndrangheta, the country's richest and most powerful mafia group.</p> <p>Famed anti-mafia prosecutor Nicola Gratteri — whose efforts to defeat the 'Ndrangheta have caused him to live under police escort for more than 30 years — said the sentencing had gone "very well".</p> <p>She said: "Out of 91 defendants, there were 70 presumed innocent who were convicted."</p> <p>About a third of the group received sentences of a decade or more, while 21 individuals were acquitted, seven at the request of prosecutors.</p> <p>The 'Ndrangheta, which is entrenched in Italy's poorest region of Calabria in the toe of the peninsula's boot, has surpassed Sicily's Cosa Nostra in power and wealth.</p> <p>The group controls the bulk of cocaine flowing into Europe.</p> <p><b>BIG FISH ON TRIAL</b></p> <p>The biggest fish in the prosecution's case have opted for the more lengthy trial, namely Mancuso "The Uncle", 67.</p> <p>He is considered the leader of the 'Ndrangheta families who dominated the Vibo Valentia province of Calabria.</p> <p>Ex-senator and lawyer Giancarlo Pittelli, 68, was accused of being Mancuso's white-collar fixer.</p>

	<p>The 'Ndrangheta has about 150 families jockeying for positions within the organisation.</p> <p>They are supported by at least 6,000 members and affiliates in Calabria, swelling to thousands worldwide, experts estimate.</p> <p>Its reach is now international, with illegal gains reinvested in the legitimate economy.</p> <p>And the 'Ndrangheta's ability to infiltrate nearly all segments of public administration back home in Calabria has allowed it to reap lucrative contracts and cement its power.</p> <p>Charges in the case include association with mafia, attempted murder, money laundering, usury, drug-dealing, extortion and illegal weapons possession.</p> <p>The maxi-trial is being held in a sprawling courtroom to accommodate the hundreds of lawyers involved and features over 900 prosecution witnesses and 58 state witnesses.</p> <p>Eclipsing the current trial in size was Italy's legendary maxi-trial of 1986-1987 that dealt a major blow to Sicily's Cosa Nostra, with 338 people convicted.</p> <p>Antimafia prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino were later assassinated by the mob.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 NC night club shooting: 1 dead, 5 wounded</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/1-dead-5-wounded-from-shootings-at-N-Carolina-16599517.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/1-dead-5-wounded-from-shootings-at-N-Carolina-16599517.php</a>
GIST	<p>AHOSKIE, N.C. (AP) — Police in northeastern North Carolina were investigating a weekend shooting melee at a night club that left one person dead and five others wounded.</p> <p>The shootings originated from the Alaysia Bar &amp; Grill in Ahoskie, according to police, where local officers arrived shortly before 1 a.m. Saturday. There they found over 100 people outside the parking lot of the Ahoskie Inn, a news release from town police said.</p> <p>Officers found the dead body of Jairen Lyles, 22, of Aulander, shot and lying on the ground, police said. Six others were taken to the hospital. One of those was hurt trying to flee the Bar &amp; Grill. Fights broke out in the parking lot while officers from several agencies tried to contain the crowd and provide help, authorities said.</p> <p>No arrests have been announced. Ahoskie police, the State Bureau of Investigation and the North Carolina Division of Alcohol Law Enforcement were investigating. Ahoskie Police Chief James Asbell wants to talk to people who left the club before officers arrived to attempt to identify who fired weapons.</p> <p>“It was a chaotic crime scene with multiple guns as evidenced by the different types of gun casings found inside and outside of the night club,” Asbell said in the release. “The fact that people were allowed into this establishment with guns led to the shootings of many people.”</p> <p>Ahoskie is 120 miles (193 kilometers) northeast of Raleigh.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Modern piracy on the high seas</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7e5kj/what-modern-pirates-look-like">https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7e5kj/what-modern-pirates-look-like</a>
GIST	<p>One November morning, the <a href="#">MV Cheung Son</a>, a cargo ship travelling from Shanghai to Malaysia’s Port Klang, was assailed by a gang of <a href="#">hijackers</a>. The ship’s 23 crew members were caught unaware, and within minutes had lost control of the vessel and been locked in the ship’s hold.</p>

Having searched the *MV Cheung Son* for valuables, the hijackers ordered the sailors out onto the deck. A report published in [The Guardian](#) in August of 2000 suggests that “their bodies were weighted, bound and gagged, and dumped overboard”. Neither the ship nor its [cargo](#) were found, and the same newspaper report claims that “the suspicion is that it has been given a new identity, with the collusion of corrupt officials”.

This is a [piracy story](#) that doesn’t involve buccaneers, eye patches or wooden legs. The hijacking – or ship-jacking, if you prefer – took place in 1998 and is one of the first recorded incidents of modern piracy in the South China Sea. It was a contemporary version of a [crime](#) that mankind has been committing since at least the days when the Greeks ruled [the waves](#).

Popular culture’s vision of what a pirate looks like ([Jack Sparrow](#), pretty much) and what a pirate does (sailing the seven seas while gargling rum and bellowing “AHOY THERE” at regular intervals) and all that comes with it (the skull and crossbones, the buried treasure) bares no resemblance to contemporary reality whatsoever.

Piracy isn’t the stuff of fiction, and it certainly isn’t a thing of the past. A [study published](#) by the [ICC International Maritime Bureau](#) in early 2021 found that 195 incidents of the crime were reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. The majority of these took place in the [Gulf of Guinea](#), the current global capital of modern international piracy.

“In reality, piracy never disappeared, but it just doesn’t affect the West anymore, and that’s why it goes unnoticed,” says maritime terrorism expert [Peter Lehr](#), author of *Pirates: A New History, from Vikings to Somali Raiders*. “During most of the 20th century, the West was preoccupied with other issues that were deemed more important, like world wars, the [Cold War](#) and the possibility of all-out [nuclear war](#) between the USSR and the USA. Compared to those fears, piracy was a minor issue – an inconvenience more than anything.”

That doesn’t mean that piracy will disappear, however. Given that global supply chains are still largely reliant on cargo ships, maritime traffic is going nowhere. Neither is piracy. “Even if we get to the stage in the future where we’ve got robot ships without any crew members onboard, pirates will learn how to hack them,” says Lehr.

In Lehr’s eyes, deterring the existing human pirates involves fighting fire with fire. “You need a lot of warships in order to patrol vast stretches of coastal water, and nowadays you also need a lot of helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft.”

Before going to that effort and expense, the piracy expert thinks it would be sensible to “establish welfare policies on land adapted to fishermen in order to give them life options away from piracy”. Many of today’s pirates are ex-sailors who worked in overexploited waters. “Put yourself in the shoes of a young fisherman in the [South China Sea](#) or off the coast of Somalia,” Lehr says. “You’d soon see how industrial trawlers from different countries deplete your fish levels, leaving you with nothing.”

Lehr adds that “the state doesn’t help, because it can’t, and because it doesn’t want to. They leave you feeling alone and you have to find a way to put food on the table for your family. What can you do? That is when piracy becomes an option. It starts out primarily as an opportunistic activity, and then, as income increases, it becomes a more [organised activity](#).”

In the end, Lehr argues, piracy exists in places where there’s a lack of law and order, and where the borders between states are vague. Location is also a key factor, as the crime is more likely to happen “in places where looting can be a very lucrative activity, as is the case with maritime traffic that’s open to attack in straits or confined waters as opposed to the high seas”.

Arguably the best known pirates of the modern day are those from [Somalia](#). It is an industry that exploded in the country following the collapse of Said Barre’s presidency after a period of civil war at the beginning of the 1990s. Law and order on the sea disappeared and coastal waters rich in highly valuable fish

like [bluefin tuna](#) became the target of industrial trawlers around the world, ousting Somali fishermen from their fishing grounds.

Targeted attacks on foreign ships began in earnest in the mid-2000s, when pirates started regularly hijacking vessels and demanding large sums of money for their return. A passenger-less French [super yacht](#), *Le Ponant*, was hijacked with 30 crew members onboard in 2008, an event that is considered the beginning of the second wave of Somali piracy. News that the ship had been released after the owners paid a €1.7 million ransom “spread like wildfire through Somalia”, as Lehr puts it. “That is why [Somali piracy exploded](#). It was about greed.”

The pirates started using trawlers or small freighters they’d captured as motherships. These were then used to launch attacks against container ships, oil tankers and anyone who crossed their path.

Following the capture of *Le Ponant*, the European Union, NATO and countries including China, South Korea and Thailand recognised that the Somali threat to maritime communication and the [global supply chain](#) required urgent action. To this day, warships from various nations carry out constant patrols in the area. However, experts like Lehr believe the strategy will only be useful for so long. “At the end of the day,” he says, “it’s expensive to keep people stationed in such distant waters.”

Not all pirates work like the Somalis do. [Nigerian pirates](#), for example, are interested in cargo, specifically in the extraction of crude oil. Their political circumstances are different and, therefore, so are their needs. In the Caribbean, another hot spot for piracy, it is often linked to drug trafficking, but in the [Bay of Bengal](#), a poorly defined border area between India and Bangladesh, the victims are usually local ships, not international shipments.

The reality of contemporary piracy occasionally rears its head in the Western media, but tends to go unremarked upon. Lehr thinks this is because, largely, it does not directly affect the West. “If we were talking about the hijacking of a Western container ship, supertanker or cruise ship, it would certainly attract media attention. But if the attacked ship is a local ship, the attack may or may not be reported in the local news, but for the international media, it is not newsworthy. Once again, who cares?”

In fact, most pirate attacks in the Straits of Malacca or the South China Sea are never reported anywhere, as long as there are no deaths. “Things change if there is a crew that has been kidnapped, as in the case of the French luxury yacht. If not, it’s easily forgotten,” Lehr points out.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Ivy League schools report bomb threats
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/ivy-league-schools-report-bomb-threats-11636324598?mod=hp_lead_pos12">https://www.wsj.com/articles/ivy-league-schools-report-bomb-threats-11636324598?mod=hp_lead_pos12</a>
GIST	<p>Ivy League schools Cornell, Columbia, and Brown Universities said they received bomb threats Sunday that prompted evacuations of some facilities.</p> <p>There weren’t any reports of explosions or damage as of Sunday afternoon.</p> <p>On Sunday at about 2:30 p.m., Columbia University issued a campuswide emergency alert after receiving bomb threats involving several of its buildings, a spokeswoman said. She said the university immediately evacuated those buildings.</p> <p>The New York Police Department investigated and determined the threats weren’t credible, she said.</p> <p>Cornell University said on Twitter on Sunday afternoon that it had received a call that bombs were being placed in its law school and three other facilities. “Ithaca Campus Law enforcement is on site and investigating campus bomb threat,” the <a href="#">school said in a tweet</a>. “Security perimeter is in place.”</p> <p>The university said Sunday evening that no credible threats were found.</p>

	<p>A Brown University spokesman said that after receiving a bomb threat by phone, the university's public safety department evacuated several buildings near the university's College Green.</p> <p>After searches by the university and local police, the authorities found no evidence of a credible threat. "Buildings that had been evacuated are now reopened, and university operations have resumed as normal," the spokesman said.</p> <p>Sunday's threats follow similar incidents at other universities in recent days. On Friday, local authorities investigated a bomb threat at Yale University. On Saturday, two Ohio schools—Miami University and Ohio University—said they had investigated campus bomb threats as well.</p> <p>The authorities didn't deem any of the threats credible.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 LAPD ends predictive policing; or did it?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/07/lapd-predictive-policing-surveillance-reform">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/07/lapd-predictive-policing-surveillance-reform</a>
GIST	<p>The <a href="#">Los Angeles</a> police department has been a pioneer in predictive policing, for years touting avant-garde programs that use historical data and software to predict future crime.</p> <p>But newly revealed public documents detail how PredPol and Operation Laser, the department's flagship data-driven programs, validated existing patterns of policing and reinforced decisions to patrol certain people and communities over others, leading to the over-policing of Black and brown communities in the metropole.</p> <p>The documents, which include internal LAPD documents and emails and were released as part of a report by the Stop LAPD Spying coalition, also suggest that pledges to <a href="#">reform</a> the programs amid rising public criticism largely rang hollow.</p> <p>A new program that took shape after Operation Laser and PredPol were shuttered bears a striking resemblance to the programs it was supposed to reform, Stop LAPD Spying and independent experts who reviewed the documents say.</p> <p>LAPD's efforts to rebrand its predictive policing experiments mirror a broader shift in the private surveillance industry, the experts say, as companies increasingly reinvent existing products in response to negative press on predictive policing.</p> <p>"Rather than re-evaluating their whole business model, they're just trying to reframe the value of the product," said Albert Fox Cahn, the founder of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (Stop), another anti-police-surveillance advocacy group. "They're saying: here's how you can prevent crime by allocating officers and changing patrols and changing who you engage with. And that's going to result in the exact same outcomes."</p> <p><b>How Operation Laser created a vicious cycle</b></p> <p>Launched in 2011, Operation Laser (an acronym for Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration) got its name from what LAPD hoped it would do: extract "offenders" with the precision of a doctor using laser surgery to remove a tumor.</p> <p>On its face, using a data-backed approach to remove a "tumor" may seem logical. The problem was, according to critics and experts, that the data the program ran on was malignant.</p> <p>Operation Laser used historical information such as data on gun-related crimes, arrests, and calls to map out "problem areas" (dubbed "laser zones") and "points of interest" (called "anchor points") for officers to focus their efforts on. A newly established group, the crime intelligence detail, worked to create chronic offender bulletins, assigning criminal risk scores to people based on arrest records, gang affiliation, probation and field interviews. Information collected during these policing efforts was again fed into computer software that further helped automate the department's crime-prediction efforts.</p>



Central to Operation Laser's success, [wrote](#) Craig Uchida, the program's architect at LAPD, in a research paper in 2012, was Palantir. The software, controversial for aiding US Immigration and Customs Enforcement in surveilling immigrants, made it easier and faster for the department to create chronic offender bulletins and put together information from various sources on people deemed suspicious or inclined to commit a crime, Uchida said.

But the picture of crime in LA the software drew up was based on calls for service, crime reports and information collected by officers, [the documents show](#), creating a vicious loop.

"When police target an area it generates more crime reports, arrests, and stops at that location and the subsequent crime data will lead the algorithm, risk assessment, or data analytic tool to direct police back to the same area," the Stop LAPD Spying report explains.

In [2019](#), the LAPD inspector general, Mark Smith, said the criteria used in the program to identify people likely to commit violent crimes were inconsistent.

Documents included in the Stop LAPD Spying report, as well as documents that had previously been made public, confirm that Operation Laser in some cases was all but precise. Relying on information collected in field cards (the interview cards officers are required to fill out when stopping someone) to help identify chronic offenders or areas that needed more patrolling, for example, meant that even random stops could mark a person as a potential suspect or make them subject to more surveillance.

Officers were instructed to fill out the field interview cards with as much information as possible every time they stopped someone. Uchida told [Wired](#) in 2017 that he knew "most of the time [the cards] didn't lead to anything, but it was ... data that went into the system, and that's what I wanted".

As the Guardian [revealed](#) on Sunday, one of the locations that Operation Laser targeted was the Crenshaw district, where the rapper Nipsey Hussle was based. Hussle had long complained about policing in his neighborhood, saying in a 2013 interview that LAPD officers "come hop out, ask you questions, take your name, your address, your cell phone number, your social, when you ain't done nothing. Just so they know everybody in the hood."

The documents show LAPD identified the site of Hussle's clothing store, Crenshaw Boulevard and Slauson Avenue, as an anchor point due to suspected gang-related activity as early as 2016.

The full extent of the operation targeting Hussle and his businesses remains unclear, but the documents show police efforts in the area were intense, and often imprecise. Searching for a robbery suspect described only as a Black man between the ages of 16 and 18, officers stopped 161 people and arrested 10 at the intersection where the store was located in a span of two weeks.

The consequences could be severe. The information of civilians stopped in the intersection would be fed into the data system, even if they hadn't committed any offenses.

Some encounters turned deadly. In 2016, LAPD shot and killed 31-year-old Keith Bursey Jr at the intersection, after the car Bursey was a passenger in was stopped by gang enforcement police investigating "an odor of marijuana". The officers shot Bursey in the back as he attempted to flee, one of six Black and Latino men to be shot by police in Laser zones in a six-month period in 2016.

Cliff Dorsey, a public defender and Bursey's cousin, said treating an entire location as a "gang area" could lead to unjustified contact with police and criminalized people based on their neighborhood affiliation. "It creates a culture of distrust where people don't feel comfortable talking to the police," he said. "When there's no trust, the community doesn't feel like their humanity is being respected ... It's this 'us versus them' mentality."

**PredPol's earthquake theory of crime**



In addition to running Operation Laser, LAPD contracted with PredPol, a company that grew out of a research project between LAPD and the UCLA professor Jeff Brantingham.

PredPol applied an earthquake prediction model to crime. The underlying theory – which the company once compared to the unproven and controversial [broken windows policing strategy](#) – was that similar to earthquakes and their aftershocks, smaller crimes were gateways to bigger crimes and occurred in similar places. While the mathematics might look complicated for “normal mortal humans”, PredPol said in a 2014 [presentation obtained by Motherboard](#), the model was “based on nearly seven years of detailed academic research into the causes of crime pattern formation”.

But academics [say](#) the theory is flawed, and the math the company pitched to police was too simple to effectively predict crime. The model was essentially assessing where arrests had been made and sending police back to those locations, according to those academics.

More than a dozen police departments [experimented with PredPol](#), including in Palo Alto and Mountain View. But by the end of 2019, both Operation Laser and PredPol had garnered intense criticism, with skeptics charging that the systems perpetuated discrimination.

By that time, several police departments had dropped their contracts with PredPol, saying there was little proof it [helped reduce crime](#). After three years of use, the Palo Alto police department “didn’t get any value out of it”, a spokesperson, Janine De la Vega, said at the time.

LAPD [initially promised reform](#), but ultimately shuttered Operation Laser in April 2019 and canceled its contract with PredPol in April 2020. LAPD conceded the data used in Operation Laser “[was inconsistent](#)” and needed to be reassessed. PredPol, it said, was terminated because of budgetary constraints due to the pandemic. Still, the police chief, Michel Moore, maintained [the underlying principles of the program were valuable](#).

#### **A bid to establish ‘digital trust’**

With the data-driven programs the LAPD had boosted for years gone, a new effort took their place. Days before announcing the end of PredPol, LAPD published information about what it called data-informed community-focused policing. The intention of DICFP, the department said, was to establish a deeper relationship between community members and police and address some of the concerns the public had with previous policing programs, all while working to prevent crime. “The legitimacy of a police department is dependent on a community’s trust in its police officers,” an April 2020 LAPD brochure on the program read.

In the brochure, Moore conceded previous strategies that focused “solely on proactive suppression” left “neighborhoods feeling over-policed, singled out, and unnerved”. To that end, LAPD would be more transparent and its processes more standardized, working to collaborate more closely with local residents.

DICFP has three goals, according to the documents in the report: increase trust, reduce crime, and assist victims of crime.

Program leaders felt regaining that public trust was critical, the documents show. Without it, they argued in internal emails, police could be forced to relinquish predictive policing tools entirely. A month after DICFP was introduced, Sean Milinowski, the product manager for predictive policing at LAPD at the time and now a police consultant, [asked](#) Andrew Ferguson, a law professor and author of *The Rise of Big Data Policing*, for help with establishing “digital trust” between police departments and communities. Malinowski wrote that he worried bad PR could cause the department to “lose good tools” if they didn’t “get out in front of it”.

However, the brochure also shows the program bears a striking resemblance in its implementation to the predictive policing programs it purportedly reformed, several experts who reviewed the brochure argued. The similarities start with what LAPD now calls “neighborhood engagement areas” or “neighborhoods experiencing crimes and low community engagement”. Similar to anchor points, those areas are identified

based on information such as crime data and calls for service, which include anything from calls about robberies to traffic-related incidents and “non-emergency” calls, according to a daily operations guide.

To address crime in neighborhood engagement areas, according to the brochure, LAPD would use a problem-solving model first introduced under Operation Laser called Sara – an acronym for scanning, analysis, response and assessment. As part of that model, police and stakeholders would use tools such as increased patrolling and surveillance to prevent future crimes.

Similar in process to Operation Laser, DICFP would lead to similar results: at least one anchor point under the previous regime was also deemed a neighborhood engagement area in 2020 and at least one other area of interest was located within what was previously a Laser zone, the documents show.

Martin Luther King Jr Park in south-west LA – which documents show was an anchor point in 2016 and 2018 – was also identified as a neighborhood engagement area in March 2020 because the parking lot adjacent to it was “where gang members are loitering”. A section in one of the documents that asks for a description of the “crime trend, activity, or quality of life issues” describes complaints of “tailgating activities with barbecue grills and alcohol” as well as overnight parking and encampments. In order to prevent future crime, the document notes, police did sweeps of the park, cited vehicles and dispatched additional gang units and patrols.

Where the document asks the officer to indicate which of the three goals of DICFP the project accomplished, nothing is circled.

Data-driven policing helps automate existing police logic, according to Shakeer Rahman, a Stop LAPD Spying community organizer. “That includes targeting poor people, targeting unhoused people, targeting Black, brown and disabled people. This is now helping to automate those practices and automate the harm, automate the banishment, automate the displacement that policing has always been responsible for.”

A relic of Operation Laser, the crime intelligence detail – which was responsible for the chronic offender bulletins – was combined with another unit and renamed the area crime and community intelligence centers. The center would determine where to deploy resources using similar sources of information as under Operation Laser, including investigative reports, arrest reports and field interviews, as well as similar tools, such as Palantir and gang databases.

LAPD said in 2020 it would [conduct a study](#) on the efficacy of DICFP. The department did not respond to questions on the status of the study.

“I don’t know about you but I’m not building trust with someone who spies on me,” said Tracey Corder, the deputy campaign director at Acre, a group that helps local organizations campaign against racial injustice.

“It sounds like a rebrand,” she continued. “It’s a co-option of organizer demands and organizing wins. We have set the stage and said policing as it exists does not work. All of this has been an effort to not actually change, but rebrand and reuse what they’ve already been doing.”

Cahn, the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project founder, said: “It seems like the worst sort of fear of organizers. Rather than actually addressing any of the substantive harms that come from predictive policing, they’re simply providing this veneer of community engagement.”

LAPD did not reply to repeated and detailed requests for comment.

#### **‘They’re trying to do some whitewashing’**

The LAPD was not alone in rebranding its predictive policing efforts. A month after the department introduced DICFP, PredPol changed its name to Geolitica. On the company website, where there was once a banner that said it was “the predictive policing company” that works to “predict critical events”,

	<p>Geolitica now boasts “data-driven community policing” that helped public safety teams “be more transparent, accountable, and effective.”</p> <p>Privacy advocates say LAPD and PredPol’s efforts were part of a larger trend in the predictive policing industry – both in police departments and private companies. In response to public criticism of predictive policing, companies have rebranded existing products or launched new products that promote police accountability and transparency.</p> <p>“They’re definitely aware of all the negative connotations of predictive policing,” said Brian Hofer, the executive director of the government reform advocacy group Secure Justice and the chair of the Oakland Privacy Commission. “They’re trying to really do some whitewashing by rebranding different verbiage and talking about serving these communities instead.”</p> <p>But safeguards shouldn’t be left to police or tech companies to implement, Corder argues.</p> <p>“When you think about the way police respond to any kind of calls for reforms from civilians, it’s always oppositional,” Corder said of police departments that use these purported accountability services. “But now all of a sudden we’re supposed to believe they are fine with oversight coming from tech companies? Anybody should be concerned about that and we should start asking the question of why.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 France police official stabbed</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/world/french-police-official-stabbed-knife-attack">https://www.foxnews.com/world/french-police-official-stabbed-knife-attack</a>
GIST	<p>A police official was <a href="#">stabbed with a knife</a> Monday in <a href="#">southern France</a> by an assailant who carried out the attack "in the name of the Prophet" according to reports.</p> <p>The policeman stabbed in Cannes was not injured "thanks to his bulletproof vest," according to French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin. The attacker was neutralized, Darmanin tweeted, without elaborating.</p> <p>"I am going to the scene immediately this morning and I offer my support to the national police and to the city of Cannes," he <a href="#">added</a>.</p> <p>The policeman was behind the wheel of a police car in the city near a police station when the assailant opened the door and stabbed him with a knife, France's BFM TV <a href="#">reported</a>.</p> <p>He then attempted to stab another policeman in the car before a third policeman opened fire, seriously injuring the attacker.</p> <p>Local reports, citing police sources, suggested the suspect carried out the attack "in the name of the Prophet" Mohammad.</p> <p>The mayor of Cannes, David Lisnard tweeted there were no deaths and the circumstances surrounding the attack are "<a href="#">being clarified</a>."</p> <p>The attack comes amid worries over violent crime and terrorism in the country.</p> <p>They are seen as <a href="#">topics of concern</a> for voters prior to the 2022 French Presidential election, according to Reuters.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/07 Boston Antifa protest violence; arrests</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/boston-antifa-protest-turns-violent-police-in-riot-gear-sent">https://www.foxnews.com/us/boston-antifa-protest-turns-violent-police-in-riot-gear-sent</a>
GIST	A protest in <a href="#">Boston</a> turned violent after <a href="#">Antifa</a> groups arrived to a "Rise Against Tyranny" <a href="#">demonstration</a> .

	<p>The protest, which began at noon Sunday, was organized by the "Super Happy Fun America" organization, which gathered at the Boston Common reportedly to protest mask and vaccine mandates.</p> <p>Several organizations such as "<a href="#">Green Monster Antifa</a>" and "Solidarity Against Hate - Boston" announced on Twitter they would be showing up to the event in order to "Tell the Capitol Rioters to Get Out of Boston."</p> <p>A local news reporter tweeted videos of the event that show police in riot gear breaking up fights.</p> <p>"We are not going to be intimidated," one person yelled as the fights broke out.</p> <p>As members of the group opposing mask and vaccine mandates spoke, Antifa rioters blared loud music and even used instruments to drown out the noise.</p> <p>The reporter noted that protesters <a href="#">brought</a> a damaged van to the event.</p> <p>Several protesters were also seen holding a flag that said "Death To Fascism" as well as flags displaying the hammer and sickle.</p> <p>Another video from a local news reporter shows Antifa members yelling "Nazis Out!" to people inside of a U-Haul van trying to leave the event.</p> <p>Boston Police Officer Stephen McNulty told Fox News that there were "two arrested after opposing sides clashed at today's scheduled event and planned counter-protest on the Boston Common. BPD assets included officers in protective equipment."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Police: man burst in flames after Taser used</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/man-burst-flames-taser-police-81000888">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/man-burst-flames-taser-police-81000888</a>
GIST	<p>CATSKILL, N.Y. -- An upstate New York man was in grave condition at a hospital after police used a Taser to subdue him and he burst into flames, authorities said Friday.</p> <p>The Times Union of Albany reported that 29-year-old man walked into the Catskill village police department last weekend and got into a confrontation with officers. Chief Dave Darling confirmed to the newspaper that officers deployed a Taser to subdue the man, who had just doused himself with hand sanitizer, and the man then burst into flames.</p> <p>Darling said the officers were familiar with the man from previous encounters.</p> <p>"I think they were afraid he was going to hurt himself, and that's what started it," Darling said. "There are still details that we're trying to develop."</p> <p>The man was taken to the Westchester Medical Center's Trauma and Burn Center, where he was in grave condition, the Times Union said.</p> <p>The police chief described the situation as "horrible" and said it was under investigation by the Greene County district attorney's office.</p> <p>Kevin A. Luibrand, an attorney for the man's family, declined to discuss details but said he had asked the police to preserve all recordings and written materials related to the encounter.</p> <p>Darling said that his officers are not equipped with body cameras but that there are video cameras in the police station.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 El Chapo's brother indicted drug trafficking</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/06/us/el-chapos-brother-indicted-drug-trafficking-charges/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/06/us/el-chapos-brother-indicted-drug-trafficking-charges/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN)The US Attorney's office in Arizona announced the unsealing of two indictments that charged high-ranking members of the <a href="#">Sinaloa drug cartel</a> with international drug trafficking, one of them the brother of <a href="#">Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman</a>, the convicted former leader of the cartel.</p> <p>A federal grand jury in Tucson returned superseding indictments in November 2019 and February 2020 against cartel members Aureliano Guzman-Loera of Sinaloa, Mexico, along with brothers Ruperto, Jose, and Heriberto Salgueiro-Nevarez of Guadalupe Y Calvo, Mexico, according to a press release from the US Attorney's office on Friday.</p> <p>"The indictments allege various violations of United States law related to the international distribution of controlled substances, including fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana, occurring over several years," the release said.</p> <p>In February 2019, <a href="#">El Chapo was convicted</a> on 10 counts, including engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise, conspiracy to launder narcotics proceeds, international distribution of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and other drugs.</p> <p>He is serving his life sentence in Colorado's Supermax prison.</p> <p>The wife of El Chapo, Emma Coronel Aispuro, <a href="#">pleaded guilty</a> in June in a federal court in Washington to drug trafficking and money laundering charges related to her husband's narcotics empire.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 China spy convicted; aviation espionage</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/yanjun-xu-ge-aviation-cincinnati-chinese-spy/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/yanjun-xu-ge-aviation-cincinnati-chinese-spy/</a>
GIST	<p>The first Chinese intelligence officer ever to be extradited to the U.S. was convicted of attempting to steal aviation trade secrets by luring industry experts to China.</p> <p>A federal jury in Ohio convicted Yanjun Xu, who worked for China's Ministry of State Security, of conspiring and attempting to commit economic espionage and theft of trade secrets, according to the Justice Department.</p> <p>Among the trade secrets that Xu tried to steal on behalf of China was technology related to GE Aviation's composite aircraft engine fan, which has not been duplicated by any other company in the world, the Justice Department said.</p> <p>Prosecutors said he paid industry experts, beginning in at least December 2013, to travel to China under the guise of giving a university presentation on their subject matter.</p> <p>Operating under aliases, Xu targeted aviation experts in the U.S. and abroad, including a GE Aviation engineer in Cincinnati, Ohio. The engineer traveled to China in May 2017 to give a presentation and met Xu, who paid for the employee's travel expenses and a stipend. The GE engineer, who no longer works for the company and has not been charged with a crime, brought confidential company documents with him, according to WCPO, which cited a sealed FBI affidavit.</p> <p>Xu later asked the engineer to send him more of the company's information, but by that time the engineer was cooperating with the FBI to lure Xu to Belgium, where he was arrested in April 2018, according to the Justice Department.</p> <p>Xu faces up to 60 years in prison. A sentencing date has not been set.</p>

	<p>"For those who doubt the real goals of the [People's Republic of China], this should be a wakeup call; they are stealing American technology to benefit their economy and military," said Alan E. Kohler Jr., the assistant director of the FBI's counterintelligence division.</p> <p>In recent years, the U.S. has increasingly accused the Chinese government of economic espionage. Under the Trump administration, the Justice Department launched its China Initiative, which made prosecuting trade theft, hacking and economic espionage cases a priority.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/06 Germany: knife attack on train; injuries</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/multiple-people-injured-knife-attack-german-train-81006864">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/multiple-people-injured-knife-attack-german-train-81006864</a>
GIST	<p>BERLIN -- A knife attack on a high-speed train in Germany has injured several people, police confirmed Saturday morning.</p> <p>Local police told The Associated Press that they received a call about the attack around 9 a.m. local time on Saturday.</p> <p>The train in question, one of Germany's high-speed ICE trains, was traveling between the Bavarian cities of Regensburg and Nuremberg at the time of the attack.</p> <p>One man has been arrested in connection with the attack at the train station in Seubersdorf, where the train is currently stopped, police said. Police said multiple people were injured but were unable to provide a specific number.</p> <p>Around 200 people were removed from the train and taken to a local restaurant for refreshments, according to German broadcaster Bayerischer Rundfunk.</p> <p>Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said the background behind the "terrible" attack was "still unclear" and is "now being clarified." He said people in Seubersdorf, a municipality located about 473 kilometers (294 miles) south of Berlin, faced no "acute danger."</p> <p>"I hope that those injured and those who witnessed this will recover quickly and completely," Seehofer said.</p> <p>Bavarian state police were on the scene in Seubersdorf, local police confirmed.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the German railway network confirmed that the station in Seubersdorf has been closed since approximately 9 a.m. and that train travel between Regensburg and Nuremberg has been suspended.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Community on edge: trial on Arbery killing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/05/us/ahmaud-arbery-shooting-trial?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=US%20News#with-a-community-on-edge-the-trial-over-the-killing-of-ahmaud-arbery-begins">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/05/us/ahmaud-arbery-shooting-trial?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=US%20News#with-a-community-on-edge-the-trial-over-the-killing-of-ahmaud-arbery-begins</a>
GIST	<p>Opening arguments in the trial over the killing of Ahmaud Arbery began on Friday morning in Brunswick, Ga., a community made uneasy this week by <a href="#">the selection of a nearly all-white jury</a> to hear the case.</p> <p>Three white men — Gregory McMichael, 65, a former police officer; Travis McMichael, his son, 35; and their neighbor William Bryan, 52 — are accused of killing Mr. Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man who was chased through a suburban neighborhood before being fatally shot by one of his pursuers in February 2020. Each faces up to life in prison for his role in Mr. Arbery's death.</p> <p>In her opening statement, Linda Dunikoski, the lead prosecutor, stressed that none of the defendants were currently law enforcement officers and that all three had assumed the worst about Mr. Arbery.</p>



“We are here because of assumptions and driveway decisions,” Ms. Dunikoski told the jury. “All three of these defendants did everything they did based on assumptions — not on facts, not on evidence.”

After lunch, Robert G. Rubin, the lawyer for Travis McMichael took the stand, the first of three presentations expected from the defense. Mr. Rubin said that Mr. McMichael had cause to believe that Mr. Arbery had committed a crime, and that Mr. Arbery was trying to escape or flee. He argued that Mr. McMichael was attempting to legally detain Mr. Arbery under the state’s “citizen’s arrest” law, a statute that was largely dismantled after Mr. Arbery’s death. And, he said, when Mr. McMichael shot and killed Mr. Arbery, it was in self-defense.

“It’s tragic that Ahmaud Arbery lost his life,” Mr. Rubin said. “But at that point, Travis McMichael is acting in self-defense. He did not want to encounter Ahmaud Arbery physically. He was only trying to stop him for the police.”

Franklin J. Hogue — representing Gregory McMichael — spoke next, echoing the argument that the defendants had acted in self-defense. The elder Mr. McMichael, he said, was “in abject fear that he is about to witness his only son be shot.”

An attorney for Mr. Bryan deferred his opening statement until later in the trial.

Among those watching the proceedings in the courtroom were Wanda Cooper-Jones, Mr. Arbery’s mother; Marcus Arbery Sr., his father; and Leigh McMichael, Gregory McMichael’s wife.

After Mr. Arbery was fatally shot on Feb. 23, 2020, the defendants told authorities that they suspected that Mr. Arbery had committed a series of break-ins in their neighborhood. They have pleaded not guilty to [charges that include murder, aggravated assault and false imprisonment](#).

Ms. Dunikoski noted that on the day Mr. Arbery was killed, none of the defendants talked about the concept of a citizen’s arrest. “Not one single person used those words,” she said.

The jury, which is made up of residents from Glynn County, where [more than a quarter of the population is Black](#), includes 11 white people and one Black person. Anxiety over the jury’s racial makeup was palpable among observers and participants during the more than two weeks that the jurors were being chosen.

Lawyers have said the trial could last a month. The extraordinarily long jury selection process, a grueling process that took two and a half week and included the seating of four alternate jurors, has already underscored the explosive nature of this case. That is particularly true in coastal Glynn County, where many of the 85,000 residents are connected by bonds of family, school or work, and where racial tension and harmony are deeply laced.

Inside the Glynn County Courthouse — a red brick building with imposing ionic columns fronting a park full of moss-covered oaks — lawyers spent days subjecting scores of potential jurors to intense rounds of questions about how much they knew about the case, whether they had formed opinions about the defendants’ guilt and their preferred news sources and social media networks.

During the selection process, Ms. Dunikoski said that she was hoping for jurors who were a “blank slate.” But the killing was one of the most notorious in South Georgia in decades, and many prospective jurors — the court system sent out 1,000 jury notices — said they had already formed opinions about it.

The lengthy process stood in stark contrast to the [case of Kyle Rittenhouse](#), an 18-year-old who is now on trial in Wisconsin for the deaths of two men and the wounding of another in the aftermath of protests in August 2020 over a police shooting. It took one day to seat a jury for that trial.

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HEADLINE	11/05 Calif. mass killer incompetent for trial
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/accused-california-mass-killer-incompetent-to-stand-trial/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/accused-california-mass-killer-incompetent-to-stand-trial/</a>



GIST	<p>SANTA ANA, Calif. — A judge ruled Friday that a man charged with killing four people in a shooting at a Southern California real estate office isn't competent to stand trial because of injuries he suffered in a shootout with police.</p> <p>Aminadab Gaxiola Gonzalez was shot in the head, and his attorney had said he might be incapable of understanding the charges against him. He didn't speak at the hearing and didn't show any obvious reaction to the proceedings, the Orange County Register reported.</p> <p>The case is now suspended indefinitely.</p> <p>The county district attorney's office said every medical expert who has evaluated Gaxiola Gonzalez has concluded he isn't competent to help his lawyers because of "deficits" caused by the wound.</p> <p>"He will now be evaluated by medical professionals who will assist the court to determine his future placement and medical treatment plan in an effort to restore his competency," said a statement from the District Attorney's office. "He will continued to be housed in a lock down facility."</p> <p>Police say that on March 31, Gaxiola Gonzalez opened fire at a mobile home brokerage company, Unified Homes, in Orange southeast of Los Angeles.</p> <p>Authorities had to use bolt cutters to break bicycle locks that had been used to shut the gates at the business complex.</p> <p>Family members of the victims were in the courtroom where Orange County Superior Court Judge Cheri Pham told them that the case couldn't proceed unless the defendant is found competent.</p> <p>"Everything that is happening now is beyond everyone's control," Pham said, according to the Register.</p> <p>"We are struggling with the system, and yet there is nothing we can do," said Raquel Ramirez Quiroz, the aunt of one of the victims. "This is just a nightmare and we can't wake up... I hope this moves faster, because the justice we are not getting is tearing this family apart."</p> <p>Gaxiola Gonzalez is charged with special-circumstances murder for the killings of Jenevieve Raygoza, 28; Luis Tovar, 50; Leticia Solis Guzman, 58; and Matthew Farias, 9. He also is charged with the attempted murder of Matthew's mother, Blanca Ismeralda Tamayo, and for allegedly shooting at two officers who weren't injured.</p> <p>Authorities haven't revealed a motive for the attack. His estranged wife worked at the business for more than a decade. But Aleyda Mendoza told The Associated Press in a text that she and Gaxiola had been separated for two years, and "he never told me anything about where he was staying or what he was doing."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Arlington: explosives found during raid</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/arlington-fbi-washington-state-patrol-operation-snohomish-county-bomb-squad/281-51b53424-b1d3-4748-abb8-013ebd5eeca3">https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/arlington-fbi-washington-state-patrol-operation-snohomish-county-bomb-squad/281-51b53424-b1d3-4748-abb8-013ebd5eeca3</a>
GIST	<p>ARLINGTON, Wash. — The Washington State Patrol bomb squad assisted the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office with a raid on a home in Arlington. Authorities found explosives and planned a controlled detonation at the home.</p> <p>SkyKING video showed several law enforcement vehicles in the driveway and on the street in front of a house at near Burn Road and 95th Avenue NE.</p> <p>State Patrol Trooper Rocky <a href="#">Oliphant tweeted Friday</a>, "WSP Bomb Squad is assisting the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and will be doing controlled destruction of explosives near Burn Rd in Arlington this</p>

	<p>evening. Nearby residents can expect to hear loud explosions. There is no danger to the public. This is an active investigation."</p> <p>Officers first responded to the residence after a reported shooting there on Nov. 4. A man showed up to Cascade Valley Hospital in Arlington and told officers he had been shot in the finger by someone at the home, according to probable cause documents.</p> <p>Police responded to the home and found the suspect has a previous felony and is prohibited from owning firearms, documents said. Authorities made more discoveries at his residence that resulted in the suspect's arrest.</p> <p>The suspect was arrested for assault in the first degree, unlawful possession of a firearm and threats to kill, according to documents. He is being held on \$1 million bail.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Spokane PD: ATF agent shot; manhunt</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/search-underway-two-armed-suspects-shooting-atf-agent/FRJPM73LXFEZLCRAWB6U4IOVWQ/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/search-underway-two-armed-suspects-shooting-atf-agent/FRJPM73LXFEZLCRAWB6U4IOVWQ/</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Police over in Spokane are searching for two armed suspects in the shooting of a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agent on Friday.</p> <p>Gunfire erupted around 5:15 p.m. in the parking lot of a motel located in the 1500 block of South Rustle Street.</p> <p>The agent was taken to the hospital along with a third suspect but the extent of their injuries are unknown.</p> <p>The agent was taking part in an unspecified investigation, an official with the Spokane Police Department said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Vandal targets firefighters West Seattle</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/firefighters-find-their-windshields-smashed-in-lot-behind-west-seattle-fire-station">https://komonews.com/news/local/firefighters-find-their-windshields-smashed-in-lot-behind-west-seattle-fire-station</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A vandal is targeting firefighters in West Seattle by going after their personal vehicles.</p> <p>Rocks, pipes and even a shopping cart are being tossed from an overpass into the parking lot of the fire station below. Now the crews are asking for help because it's already happened twice this week.</p> <p>The first time Fire Station 36 got hit was Tuesday morning. A truck and a car that were in the back lot both had windshield cracks so bad they were no longer safe to drive. Firefighters also found large rocks nearby on the pavement.</p> <p>At that point, crews started parking on the far end of the station opposite the overpass, which has been closed to car traffic ever since the West Seattle Bridge shut down.</p> <p>Then it happened again on Wednesday night and three more personal vehicles ended up with dents and cracked glass. Crews had no doubt this was a blatant and malicious attack, according to a report compiled by one of the firefighters, and they started to worry about their safety.</p> <p>When police came to investigate, firefighters told them they've been having problems with a homeless man who camps nearby. They said he often starts fires and the smoke drifts into the living quarters at Station 36. They also said he ignores their demands to put them out and instead has set up several effigies of firefighters around his encampment.</p>

	<p>Melissa Goslin, who was spending time with friends at a nearby restaurant and bar, has seen the same problems.</p> <p>“He’s had several personal fires and one night we were mad because it was really high and close to touching the overpass,” Goslin said. “We went over and asked him to put it out and he didn’t so we went over there later with a fire extinguisher from someone’s car and we put it out.”</p> <p>An officer interviewed the man with the effigies and in the police report described him as hostile, but so far no arrests have been made.</p> <p>Firefighters are now asking for a surveillance system to be installed and fencing to be put up to keep people from walking on the overpass.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the Seattle Fire Department said they are actively taking steps to address the complaints.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/05 Gunfire erupts east Seattle neighborhood</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/gunfire-erupts-after-road-rage-dispute-in-columbia-city">https://komonews.com/news/local/gunfire-erupts-after-road-rage-dispute-in-columbia-city</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A road rage dispute devolved into gunfire Friday evening in Columbia City where officers said nearly a dozen shots were fired.</p> <p>Seattle Police tells KOMO News that two drivers had been chasing each other when one pulled out a pistol and then pulled the trigger. A portion of Rainier Avenue was closed in both directions near S. Alaska Street while officers investigated. At least two bullets pierced the windshield of the victim’s red Toyota with ten casings recovered in all. The driver who opened fire then sped away.</p> <p>“He got lucky because he didn’t get hurt,” said the owner of nearby Nong’s Barber Shop. “I’ve lived here for a long time in this area. I’m used to it now.”</p> <p>With what could be interpreted as an shift in the city’s politics following Tuesday’s election, he wants to see Mayor-Elect Bruce Harrell address the issue.</p> <p>“He has to do something about violence in Seattle.”</p> <p>During his campaign, Harrell called on the need for more officers that come from the communities they would serve. He’s also mentioned more unarmed officers responding to mental health calls and has said he would implement automatic gunfire detection systems, saying the city’s current complaint-based reporting falls short.</p> <p>According to SPD, shots-fired calls this year are up 76 percent with non-fatal shootings up nearly 30 percent.</p> <p>When it comes to tackling gun violence, there are different ideas depending on who you ask. Nong, for example, believes more cops on the streets would help. Not everyone agrees.</p> <p>“More police officers is not the solution,” one man told KOMO News at a Safeway not far from Friday’s shooting. He said more gun control is needed with stricter laws to limit who can get their hands on one.</p> <p>“The gun violence is really a threat for the community,” he added.</p> <p>In an email to KOMO News, SPD said that both 9mm and .40 caliber casings were found at the scene. It’s unclear if more than one person opened fire.</p>
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